VOL. 10

SOS

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see page 144

SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

JEROEN BOSCH
EDITOR

VOL. 10

No time to study opening theory? Shock your opponent with an SOS!

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SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

10

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CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

Readers Write – A Good Excuse

SOS-7, Chapter 3, p.25

We received a sympathetic letter from Wayne Gradl from the United States who paid a tribute to the late Dr Erich Marchand – an avid player of the O'Kelly Sicilian.

By referring to the game Hou Yifan-Movsesian, Wijk aan Zee 2008, he remarked that 6.♗g5 was worth looking at – directing us to the gem Shamkovich-Marchand of over three decades ago.

□ **Leonid Shamkovich**
■ **Erich Marchand**
United States 1977

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 a6 3.♘c3 b5

3...e6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 is the Kan Variation of the Sicilian – this was my recommendation in SOS-7 – thus demonstrating that 3.♘c3 is definitely not the refutation of the O'Kelly.

4.d4 cxd4

4...e6 is a speciality of Kurajica's – see SOS-7.

5.♘xd4 ♗b7

5...e6 would be my preference and that of Mr. Gradl's.

6.♗g5!?

Shooting into space and aiming to take on f6 should Black now proceed with 6...♘f6. 6.♗d3 e6 7.0-0 ♗c5 8.♘b3 ♗e7 9.e5 ♕c7 10.♖e1 f5!? was the afore-mentioned game Hou Yifan-Movsesian, Wijk aan Zee 2008.

6...♕a5?!

6...h6 7.♗h4 d6 is stronger (Sarwat-Csom, Cairo 1997) as Wayne Gradl remarked in his e-mail to us.

Csom had earlier tried the odd 6...f6?! 7.♗e3 e6 8.♕g4 ♘c6 9.♘xc6 ♗xc6 10.0-0-0 ♕a5 11.♔b1 ♘e7 12.♗d3±. Sax-Csom, Warsaw 1987.

6...g6 7.a4 b4 8.♘d5± is better for White according to an old analysis by Krnic and Cvetkovic.

7.♘b3 ♕b6 8.♗e2 e6 9.0-0 b4?

Trying to win material is very risky when so much behind in development.

10.♘a4 ♕c6 11.♘a5 ♕xa4 12.♘xb7 ♕c6 13.♘d8!

The star move! It is not often that a white knight ends up on d8 so early in the game to play havoc in the opponent's camp.

13...♕c7 14.♗h5!

Another lovely move. Shamkovich manages to coordinate his pieces perfectly.

14...g6 15.♕f3 d6

Or 15...f6 and now the prosaic 16.♗xf6 ♘xf6 17.♕xf6 gxh5 18.♕xh8 ♕xd8 19.♕xh7 is the easiest win.

16.♗g4! h6 17.♗h4 ♗g7 18.e5! d5

And now for the final onslaught:

19.♗xe6! fxe6 20.♘xe6 ♕b7 21.♘xg7+ ♕xg7 22.♕xd5 Black is helpless against the numerous threats.

22...♕a7 23.♖ad1 g5 24.e6 ♔f8 25.♕f3+

Intending to mate after 25...♔g7 26.♖d7+ ♘xd7 27.♕f7+. Black resigned.

Nowhere near the refutation of the O'Kelly, but Mr Gradl gave us the perfect excuse to show a lovely attacking game!

♕h5 in Short's Caro-Kann

SOS-8, Chapter 2, p.17

In SOS-8 Ruben Felgaer expressed his admiration for Nigel Short for playing 2.♘e2 versus the Caro-Kann. Short's contributions to the theory (and practice) of the Caro-Kann Advance, notably the 4.♘f3 line, are rather well-known. However, as Felgaer testifies, Short's games with 2.♘e2 are just as important for the evaluation of this SOS. The present game features one of the critical variations – notice the remarkable 8.♕h5. I have included a letter of on of our readers with an interesting suggestion for Black. By the way, see the end of this chapter for a great game with this 2.♘e2 Caro-Kann...

□ **Ernesto Fernandez Romero**
■ **Keti Tsatsalashvili**
Los Llanos de Aridane 2008

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5

2...♘f6!? was Hauchard's choice. Observe two players in their quest for originality: 3.♘bc3 (3.e5 ♘d5 4.d4 d6 and White's knight is a little awkward in what has become a type of Alekhine) 3...d6 (why not a Pirc or Philidor?) 4.g3 e5 5.♗g2 h5!? (more mundane were 5...g6 or 5...♗e7) 6.h3 h4 7.g4 g5!? 8.d4 ♘fd7 9.♗e3 ♗e7 10.♕d3 ♘f8 11.a4 (11.0-0-0) 11...♘g6 12.0-0 ♘a6 13.f3 ♘c7 14.♖fd1 ♘e6 15.d5 ♘ef4 16.♘xf4 exf4 17.♗d4 0-0 18.dxc6 bxc6 19.♕c4 ♕e8 20.♘e2 ♘e5 and play was about equal in Cornette-Hauchard, France 2008.

3.e5 c5

This is the main line, as the customary 3...♗f5 (after 2.d4 and 3.e5 that is) is customary believed to run into trouble after 2.♘e2.

However, let's have a look at **3...♗f5 4.♘g3 ♗g6 5.h4**

Now 5...h6 6.h5 ♗h7 7.e6! fxe6 8.d4 is one of the main ideas behind 2.♘e2.

However, our reader Christian Köpke wonders if **5...h5!** (the exclam is his) isn't stronger: 6.e6 fxe6 7.d4 ♕d6 8.f4 ♘h6 9.♗d3 (9.♘xh5 ♘f5 10.g4 c5!) 9...♘f5 and here Köpke observes that Black is much better off compared to the line starting with 5...h6, and wonders if White has enough compensation (referring to the game Petraki-Kadimova, Athens 2007). I agree with his verdict.

I would personally prefer 8.♗d3!? ♗xd3 (worse is 8...♗f7 9.0-0 ♘d7 10.♖e1 0-0-0 11.♕e2 g6 12.♘d2 ♗g7 13.♘f3, with typical compensation, Rohonyan-Zdebskaja, Kramatorsk 2002) 9.♕xd3, but admittedly Black can play 9...e5 here.

On move 6 alternatives for 6.e6 hardly seem to work either:

– Thus, 6.♗e2!? e6 7.♘xh5 (7.d4 c5 transposes to a line in the Advance Variation that is known to be equal) 7...♗xh5 8.♗xh5 g6 9.♗f3 ♖xh4 10.g3 ♖xh1+ 11.♗xh1 promises nothing for White.

– While, 6.♘c3!? e6 7.♘ce2 may be interesting, but 6...d4 7.♘ce2 ♕d5! looks much better – not 7...d3 8.cxd3 ♗xd3 9.e6!.

4.d4 ♘c6

4...e6 5.♘d2 ♘c6 6.♘f3 ♘ge7 7.c3 was Short-Lein, Hastings 1979/80. See SOS-8.

5.c3 ♗f5

5...cxd4 6.cxd4 ♗f5 7.♘g3 (7.♘bc3 e6 8.♗e3 ♘ge7 9.♘f4! was indicated by Felgaer as White's best way towards an advantage) 7...♗xb1 (7...♗g6) 8.♖xb1 e6 9.a3 f6 10.exf6 (10.♗d3) 10...♘xf6 11.♗e3 ♗d6 12.♗e2 0-0 13.0-0 ♕d7 14.♗d3 ♕f7 15.♖c1 ♖ac8 16.b4±, Chuprov-Ionov, Moscow 2008.

6.dxc5! ♘xe5

Here 6...e6 7.b4! a5 8.♘d4! axb4 9.cxb4 ♕c7 10.♗b5 was very good for White in Short-Gulko, Horgen 1995.

7.♘d4 ♗d7 8.♕h5!

The most ambitious move. White takes advantage of the fact that the bishop is on d7 leaving pawn d5 uncovered. 8.♗e2 e6 9.b4 was Short-Speelman, Chester 1979.

8...♘c6

8...♘g6 is also met by 9.♕xd5 (Vukovic-Markovic, Jahorina 2001). 8...♕c7?! 9.♘b5 ♕b8 10.♗f4 ♘d3+ 11.♗xd3 ♕xf4 12.♘d2 ♘f6 13.♕e2 a6?? 14.♘d6+ 1-0 was the rapid game Felgaer-Cuartas, Barcelona 2006.

9.♕xd5 ♘f6 10.♘xc6!?

White's idea is to transpose straight into a favourable ending (or queenless middlegame). Instead, 10.♕g5 e5 11.♘xc6 ♗xc6 was Felgaer-Annaberdiev, Turin Olympiad 2006. As Felgaer analyses in SOS-8, he could now have obtained a nice advantage with the greedy 12.♕xe5+.

10...♕c7

If 10...♘xd5 then 11.♘xd8 ♖xd8 12.♗c4±,

while 10...♗xc6 11.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 12.b4!? is also slightly better for White.

11.♕e5

The point is that Black must now take back on c6 with the queen. 11.♕g5!? ♗xc6 12.♗f4.

11...♕xc6 12.♘a3

White is ready to gain more time. The position looks like a pleasant 2.c3 Sicilian.

12...♕e4+

White has a plus after 12...♘g4 13.♕g3 ♕xc5 14.h3.

However, 12...e6 13.♘b5 (13.b4) provides food for thought. See for example: 13...♗xc5 14.♘c7+ ♔e7 15.♘xa8 ♗xf2+ 16.♔d1 ♖xa8 17.♔c2. On move 14 in this line White can also try: 14.♗e3 ♗xe3 15.♘d6+ and now: 15...♕xd6 (15...♔f8 16.fxe3) 16.♕xd6 ♗xf2+ 17.♔d1 ♗a4+ 18.♔e2 (or 18.b3 ♖d8 19.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 20.bxa4 ♘d5 with great compensation)

18...♗b5+ 19.♔f3 ♗c6+ 20.♔e2 looks like a spectacular way to circumvent the Sofia rules if you are willing to draw quickly...

13.♕xe4 ♘xe4 14.♗e3

White has a very pleasant ending. Black might win back the pawn but it will cost him.

14...♖c8 If 14...e6 then 15.♘b5 or 15.c6 ♗xc6 – 15...bxc6 16.♘c4± – 16.♘b5!.

15.c6!? ♗xc6 16.f3 ♘f6 17.♗xa7 Now White is a sound pawn up. In the game Black quickly goes completely astray.

17...g5? 18.♗d4 ♖g8 19.♘b5 g4 20.f4 Playing it safe. Also possible is 20.♘a7 gxf3 21.gxf3. **20...g3? 21.♘a7 ♖d8 22.♘xc6 bxc6 23.a4** Here comes the passer. White is completely winning.

23...♘d5 24.hxg3 ♖xg3 25.♔f2 ♖g8 26.g3 f6 27.♖e1 ♖b8 28.b4 ♔d8 29.a5 ♖a8 30.♖xh7 And Black had enough. **1-0**

Updating Gajewski

SOS-8, Chapter 11, p.91

The 2008 Olympiad took place in Dresden and finished in a resounding victory for Armenia. This major event always produces great chess. I would like to take the opportunity to update Grzegorz Gajewski's amazing SOS-idea in the Ruy Lopez Chigorin: 10...d5!.

□ **Sarunas Sulskis**
■ **Hrvoje Stevic**
Dresden Olympiad 2008

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♘a5

9...♖b8!? is another idea from Gajewski – see SOS-6.

10.♗c2 d5!?

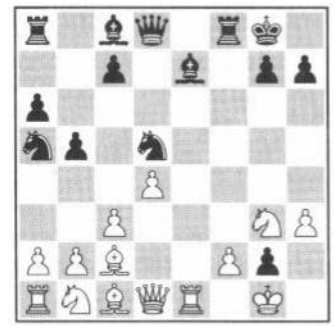
This is Gajewski's great find in a standard position where Black has always played 10...c5 automatically. Combining two respectable Ruy Lopez lines – the Marshall Attack and the more sedate Chigorin – is pretty outrageous and its inventor deserves the highest praise from a creative point of view. Gajewski first played it in 2007, and his idea immediately caught on, as I was able to report in SOS-8. The results are pretty good for Black and the popularity of 10...d5 has not waned in 2008. Croatian grandmaster Hrvoje Stevic is one of Gajewski's most loyal supporters.

11.d4

Comparatively innocent are 11.d3 dxc4 12.dxe4 ♕xd1 13.♖xd1 and 11.♘xe5 dxe4. The text is critical, as is the acceptance of the gambit pawn with 11.exd5. After 11...e4! we are at a crossroads:

– 12.♗xe4 ♘xe4 13.♖xe4 ♗b7 14.d4 ♖c8!? (or 14...♗xd5 15.♖e1 ♗d6) 15.♗f4 ♘c4 16.b3 (16.♖e2 ♗xd5 was Adams-Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007. Instead of 16...♗xd5, 16...♕xd5! 17.♘bd2 ♘xb2 18.♕c2 ♗a3! is given as unclear by Alexey Kuzmin in New In Chess Yearbook 88) 16...♘b6 17.c4 bxc4 18.bxc4 ♘xc4 19.♘c3 ♘b6!? (19...♘d6 20.♖e1 ♘b5 Kaplan-Ragger, Yerevan 2007) 20.♕b3 ♖b8 21.♖e5!? ♗a8 22.♘g5!? ♖f8!? was played in the fifth round of the Olympiad – Carlsson-Stevic, Dresden 2008. The game ended in a draw.

– 12.♘g5 ♘xd5 13.♘xe4 f5! 14.♘g3 f4 15.♘e4 f3 16.d4 fxg2 17.♘g3



17...g6!? (a novelty. Instead, 17...♕d6 was played in the stem game V.Kuznetsov-Gajewski, Pardubice 2007, see SOS-8 for an analysis, other alternatives on move 12 are also mentioned there) 18.♗e4 ♗xh3 19.♗h6 (White cannot win a piece with 19.♗xd5+ ♕xd5 20.♖xe7 because of 20...♖xf2! when White loses after, say 21.♔xf2 ♖f8+ 22.♔g1 ♖f1+ 23.♘xf1 gxf1♕+ 24.♕xf1 ♗xf1 25.♔xf1 ♕h1+ and so on) 19...♖f7 20.♕d3 (20.♗xg2 ♗xg2 21.♔xg2 ♗g5! should win for Black who is ahead in a development, but more importantly can easily get at White's weak kingside) 20...♕d6 21.♘d2 ♗f8 and Black was better in Dabo Peranic-Stevic, Bizovac 2008.

11...♘xe4

The alternative is 11...dxe4 12.♘xe5 c5 13.♗e3 (13.♗xe4 ♘xe4 14.♖xe4 ♗b7 and Black has a lot for the pawn. SOS-8 now covers 13.♗g5 ♗b7, which seems fine for Black) White's attention therefore later turned to 13.♗e3 which has received quite a few practical tests: 13...♗b7 14.♘d2 ♕c7 15.♕b1! (this is probably best. The alternative 15.♗f4 cxd4 16.♘xe4 ♘d5! 17.♗g3 f5 18.♘g6 ♕c6 19.♘xf8 ♖xf8 20.♕xd4 ♘c4! was very sharp in Z.Almasi-Stevic, Plovdiv 2008 – Black won) 15...cxd4 16.♗xd4 (16.cxd4 ♗b4 17.a3 ♗xd2 18.♗xd2 ♖fd8 is fine for Black, Smikovsky-Lavrov, Novokuznetsk 2008). The next few moves are forced: 16...♗d6 17.♘g4 ♘xg4 18.hxg4 ♗h2+! 19.♔h1

– Bad, now is 19...♕f4? 20.♘f1 losing the bishop, Baramidze-Dzhuraev, Gaziantep 2008.

– Gajewski himself has played the risky 19...f5!? 20.gxf5 ♗f4 21.♘f1 (21.♘b3) 21...♖xf5 22.♗xe4 ♖h5+ 23.♔g1 ♗h2+ 24.♘xh2 ♕xh2+ 25.♔f1 ♕f4 26.♗xb7 ♘xb7 27.♕d3 ♘d6, and Black was better but did not convert his advantage in Kononenko-Gajewski, Pardubice 2008.

– 19...♗f4 20.♘xe4 ♖fe8 21.g5 ♘c6! (21...♖e6? 22.♘c5! ♖xe1+ 23.♕xe1 ♗xg5 24.♘xb7 ♘xb7 25.♕e4 g6 26.♖e1 gave White a huge edge in Korneev-De Jong, Porto Mannu 2008) 22.♗e3 ♗xe3 23.♖xe3 ♘e5 and Black still has enough compensation for the pawn, as was borne out in the game Kotronias-Estremera Panos, Liverpool 2008: 24.♕d1 ♘c4 25.♖e2 ♘xb2 26.♕e1 ♖e6 27.f3∓ ♕f4? 28.♘f6+! gxf6 29.♖xe6 fxe6 30.♕xe6+ ♔f8 31.♖c1! and after 31...♕xg5 32.♕e7+ ♔g8 33.♕xh7+ ♔f8 34.♕e7+ White has a perpetual (but no more).

Note that even 11...c5 is playable: 12.dxc5 ♘xe4 13.♘xe5 ♗xc5 14.♘d3 ♗b6 15.♗e3 ♘c4 16.♗xb6 play is about equal and a draw was agreed in Kotsur-Meister, Satka 2008. The remarkable move order in the game was 9...♘a5 10.♗c2 c5 11.d4 d5!?.

Let us return to the capture on e4 with the knight, as played by Stevic in the game.

12.♘xe5 f6 13.♘d3

After 13.♘f3 ♘c4 14.♗xe4 dxe4 15.♖xe4 ♗b7 Black has typical 'Marshall' compensation for the pawn. In fact, after 16.♖e1 ♖e8 17.♘bd2 ♘b6 18.b3 ♕d7 White saw nothing better but to return the pawn with 19.c4 ♗xf3 20.♘xf3 bxc4 21.bxc4 ♘xc4 22.♕b3 ♕b5 23.♗f4 ½-½, Pavasovic-Stevic, Sibenik 2008.

13...♗d6 14.♗f4

One round later Zoltan Almasi played 14.♘d2 here. After 14...♖e8 (one possible improvement is 14...♗b7!?, but not 14...♘xd2?! 15.♕h5! f5 16.♗xd2±) 15.♕h5 ♗b7 16.♘f1 ♕d7 (16...♘c4) 17.♗f4 ♘c4 18.♗xd6 ♕xd6 19.♘c5! ♗c6 20.b3! ♘a3 21.♗xe4 dxe4 22.♖ac1 g6 23.♕h6 a5 24.♘g3 f5 25.♘e2 White controls the darks squares, and has more influence in the centre, and was therefore clearly better in Almasi-Brunello, Dresden 2008.

14...♘c4 15.b3 ♘b6 16.♘d2!? ♗f5

White has compensation for the pawn after 16...♘xc3 17.♕f3.

17.♘xe4 dxe4 18.♗xd6 cxd6 19.♘f4 d5

White already has slight problems here. Black has a space advantage and pawn c3 could be weak.

20.a4 bxa4 20...♕d6!?. **21.bxa4**

21...g5!?

Grabbing even more space. The normal move was 21...♕d6.

22.♘e2 ♗g6 23.a5 ♘c4 24.♗b3 ♖c8

White now has to take the powerful knight.

25.♗xc4 ♖xc4 26.♖a4 ♖xa4! 27.♕xa4 ♗e8! 28.♕a3 ♗b5

Stevic has managed to keep control over square c4. Black has a pleasant game and won after a long game. I give the remaining moves with some light annotation:

29.♘c1 f5!? 29...♕c7. **30.♘b3 g4!** Playing for an immediate attack. 30...f4 was also playable. **31.hxg4 fxg4 32.♖e3 ♕h4 33.g3 ♕h3 34.c4!** The only defence – 34.♕c1 ♖f5 just mates. **34...♗xc4 35.♘d2 ♗b5** After 35...♖xf2 36.♔xf2 ♕h2+ 37.♔e1 ♕g1+ White grovels on with 38.♘f1 ♕xf1+ 39.♔d2. **36.♕c5! ♕h5 37.♖xe4** Now the chances are almost equal again. **37...♕g5 38.♕e7?! ♕xe7 39.♖xe7 ♖c8** After the exchange of queens only Black can win. **40.♘b3 ♖c2 41.♘c5 ♗e2! 42.♔g2 ♔f8 43.♖e3 ♔f7 44.♘d7 ♖d2 45.♘e5+ ♔f6 46.♔g1 ♔f5 47.f3 h5!? 48.fxg4+ hxg4 49.♘c6 ♗f3 50.♔f1 ♗e4 51.♔e1 ♖a2 52.♖b3 ♗f3 53.♖e3 ♗e4 54.♖b3 ♖g2 55.♘b4 ♗f3 56.♘xa6 ♖xg3 57.♘c5 ♖g1+ 58.♔d2 ♖d1+ 59.♔e3 ♖e1+ 60.♔f2 ♖e2+ 61.♔f1 ♖a2 62.♖e3 ♔f4 63.♖e7 ♖xa5** and Black won on move 78.

Flank Attack in Correspondence Chess

SOS-3, Chapter 3, p.28

We often receive letters from avid SOS readers. This time a letter from German International Correspondence Master Thomas Neuer drew our attention to a computer novelty in the 4.h4 Grünfeld.

□ **Thomas Neuer**
■ **Michael Klengel**
Germany cr 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.h4 c5 5.dxc5 d4 6.♘b5

6...a6!? For 6...♘c6 see SOS-3. The text is a novelty that forces an ending. **7.♘xd4 e5 8.♘b3 ♕xd1+ 9.♔xd1 ♘bd7** This is perhaps slightly inaccurate. 9...♘c6 looks playable too. **10.c6!** To damage Black's pawn structure. **10...bxc6**

11.g3!? ♘e4 12.♗e3 ♘df6 13.♗g2 ♗f5 14.♔c1 0-0-0 15.♗xe4 ♗xe4?! Slightly dubious according to our correspondent, who prefers 15...♘xe4. **16.f3 ♗f5 17.♘h3 ♗e6 18.♗g5** and White managed to convert his slight endgame advantage. However, it is clear that 6...a6 deserves attention.

A Sveshnikov Sac

Another SOS-reader, Martin Rieger, has suggested a daring sacrifice in the Sveshnikov – adding several pages of analysis. After corresponding with Sveshnikov expert (and regular SOS author) Dorian Rogozenco we are not convinced of its correctness. But why not show you Rieger's idea?

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♘db5 d6 7.♗g5 a6 8.♘a3 b5

9.♘axb5 axb5 10.♗xb5 ♗b7! This is what Rogozenco considers the main option for Black. 10...♗d7 11.0-0 ♗c7 12.♗xf6 gxf6 (12...♗xf6! Bosch, planning 13.♕xd6 ♘d4) 13.♘d5 ♖b8 14.a4 was Rieger's main line. We will now follow Rieger's analysis: **11.♗xf6 ♕xf6 12.0-0 ♕d8 13.♕d5 ♖c8 14.a4 ♗e7 15.a5 0-0 16.a6 ♗a8 17.♗xc6** To advance with the queenside pawns. **17...♗xc6 18.♕d3** And now rather than Rieger's 18...♖b8 Rogozenco notes that Black has **18...f5! 19.exf5** 19.♘d5 fxe4 20.♕xe4? ♖f4 should win for Black. **19...d5** with an excellent game.

So Martin Rieger's idea doesn't work in the end, but remember: he who dares wins!

He who dares wins!

SOS-7, Chapter 6, p.57

The Rubinstein Variation is one of the most solid ways of fighting against the Nimzo-Indian. Yet, here too, it is possible to surprise your opponent with a SOS! – as Dorian Rogozenco demonstrated in SOS-7. Let's take a look at a few recent examples in this exciting line.

□ **Artur Vasilov**
■ **Evgeny Shaposhnikov**
Kazan 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 ♘e4!?

Black moves the same piece twice in the

opening and thus sins against the rules of normal opening conduct. Yet, there is something profoundly logical too in increasing the pressure on c3 and occupying the e4-square. After White's best reply

5.♕c2

Black faces an important choice. He can either try to preserve his knight with 5...f5 (when he must be ready to sacrifice a pawn in certain lines); or he can 'cash in' now by taking on c3, thus doubling White's pawns and obtaining the typical Nimzo-Indian structure without even relinquishing his dark-squared bishop.

5...♘xc3!?

Did I tell you that this comes at a price too? Black loses time and is best-advised to retreat his bishop along the a5-e1 diagonal to the odd square a5. Meanwhile White has a strong centre and can freely develop his kingside. While this is clearly risky, strategically this is a very ambitious set-up for Black. For, if Black has the time to develop ...d6, ...♘d7, ...0-0, and can contain White's centre with ...c5, and possibly ...e5, then he may well be better.

Let's take a brief look at the alternative 5...f5 (see for all the details SOS-7)

6.♗d3 0-0 (6...♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 0-0 is a decent alternative. Note that 8.♗xe4 fxe4 9.♕xe4 is answered by 9...d5 10.♕d3 ♕g5!? with compensation due to the pressure on the light squares) 7.♘e2 (this is the best move. 7.♗xe4 fxe4 8.♕xe4 d5 9.♕d3 b6 again gives compensation along the light squares, while 8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 d5 transposes to the previous note. Black is fine after 7.♘f3 b6 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♗b7 as Rogozenco explains in SOS-7) 7...b6 8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.♘xc3 ♘xc3 10.♕xc3 ♗b7

– 11.♗d2 d6 12.♕c2 ♘d7 13.e4 ♕h4!? 14.♖ae1 ♘f6 15.exf5 ♗xg2! is a trick to remember – Black forces perpetual check: 16.♔xg2 ♕g4+ 17.♔h1 ♕f3+ 18.♔g1 ♕g4+ 19.♔h1 ♕f3+ ½-½ Verzhansky-Carron, Winterthur 2008.

– 11.f3 d6 12.b3 ♘d7 13.♗b2 ♕g5 14.♖ac1 ♘f6 15.♗c1 ♕h5 16.♕c2 ♖ae8 is a standard-type of position that is perhaps slightly better for White, Khairul-Sadorra, Kuala Lumpur 2007.

– For 11.b4 d6 12.♗b2 ♘d7 see SOS-7.

6.bxc3 ♗a5 7.♗d3

White chooses the most flexible set-up with ♗d3 and ♘e2.

In practice 7.♘f3 is also played. After 7...d6 8.♗d3 ♘d7 9.♗d2 (9.0-0 h6 10.♘d2 c5 11.f4 0-0 12.♘e4 ♗c7 remember this move it is part of Black's general plan – he wants to play ...b6 without cutting off his bishop, Rendboe-De Verdier, Borup 2008) 9...h6 10.e4 e5 (10...c5) 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗e3 c5

13.♘d2 (White prepares f4, but overlooks(?) a neat tactical trick) 13...♗xc3! 14.♕xc3 cxd4 15.♗xd4 exd4 16.♕xd4 ♕f6 17.♕xf6 ♘xf6 18.♖fb1 ♘d7 19.♗f1 ♘c5 with equal chances, Fish-Turov, Kallithea 2008.
7.♗a3 d6 8.♘f3 ♘d7 9.♖d1 ♕e7 10.♗d3 c5 11.0-0 ♗c7 12.♘d2 h6 13.f4 0-0 14.♖f3 b6 was Alexandrov-V.Popov, Moscow 2006. Black won, see SOS-7.

7...d6 8.♘e2 h6

This is always necessary before Black can castle.

9.0-0 ♘d7

Inaccurate is 9...0-0?! 10.e4 c5 11.f4 ♘c6? 12.d5 ♘b8 13.f5 exf5 14.exf5 f6 15.♘f4 with a huge positional advantage in Korobov-Fier, Beijing rapid 2008.

10.f4

After 10.e4 Black should not play 10...e5?! (10...c5), when 11.f4 c5 12.h3 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♗b6 14.fxe5 ♘xe5 15.♔h1 ♘c6 16.♗b2 was clearly better for White in Cossin-Bruned, Cappelle la Grande 2008.

10...c5 This is the correct way to counter in the centre.

11.d5 11.e4!?. **11...♘f6 12.e4 ♗c7** The bishop belongs on c7, much like in the Snake Benoni, to prevent e4-e5. **13.♗d2 0-0 14.♖ae1 a6** Shaposhnikov seeks counterplay with ...b5. **15.♘g3** 15.♔h1. **15...b5!** With this flank action Black is able to release the pressure in the centre. **16.cxb5 exd5 17.exd5 c4!** Black opens the a7-g1 diagonal with tempo. **18.♗xc4 ♗b6+ 19.♔h1 ♘g4** 19...axb5. **20.h3** Black is fine after 20.♘f5 ♗xf5 21.♕xf5 ♘f2+, or 21...♕h4 22.h3 ♘f2+.

20...♘f2+

Black can force a draw if he wants to. The grandmaster wants to win of course. Inserting 20...axb5 does not help: 21.♗xb5 ♘f2+ 22.♔h2 ♘g4+. Best was 20...♕h4!, when White must play 21.♘f5 (21.♘e4 f5!−+; 21.♖f3 ♘f2+ 22.♔h2? ♘xh3!−+). After 21...♗xf5 (21...♘f2+ 22.♔h2 ♘g4+) 22.♕xf5 ♘f2+ 23.♔h2 Black now has the neat 23...g6 24.g3 (24.♕d7 ♖ac8 is complicated but somewhat better for Black; 24.♕c2? ♘g4+ 25.♔h1 ♕g3−+) 24...♕d8! 25.♕c2 ♕c8!, when h3 and bishop c4 are both under attack.

21.♔h2 ♘g4+ 22.♔h1 ♗f2?

Laudable as the attempt is to avoid the draw, objectively, this is too risky. Black could still play 22...♕h4!

23.♖xf2 ♘xf2+ 24.♔g1 ♘xh3+ 25.gxh3 ♕h4

For his sacrificed material Black has destroyed White's protective pawn shield. The minor pieces are strong though in this position.

26.♔f2 axb5 27.♗xb5 ♕xh3 28.♖h1 ♕g4 29.♗e2

29.a4 was another very safe move, as

29...♗d7 is answered by 30.♕d1!.

29...♕d7 30.♖g1?

The idea to occupy the g-file is not bad. But with such a king it is important to have good piece coordination. This was most easily achieved with 30.♗e3 ♖e8 31.♗d4!.

30...♖e8 31.♗e3??

Ironically, White has only himself to blame. With bishop and rook on the same diagonal he is asking for: **31...♖xe3! 32.♔xe3 ♕a7+ 33.♔f3 ♕xg1** and White resigned after **34.♗b5 ♗b7 35.c4 ♖a3+ 0-1**

Spectacular Draw in Fianchetto Spanish

SOS-2, Chapter 16, p.121

Grandmaster Julian Radulski is a big expert in the Ruy Lopez fianchetto line starting with 3...g6. In the present game he spectacularly improves upon one of his own games to achieve – a draw!

□ **Vasil Spasov**
■ **Julian Radulski**
Borovets 2008

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.d4

This is the most forcing line against 3...g6. See SOS-2 for other options.

4...exd4 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.♗xe7 ♕xe7 7.♗xc6

7.0-0 ♘f6 8.e5 ♘h5! see The SOS-Files of SOS-3, p.14.

7...♕b4+!?

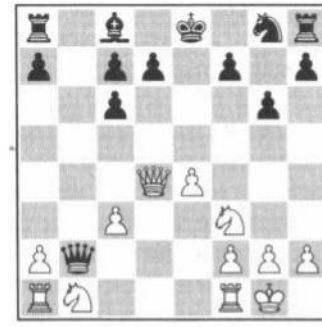
More interesting than 7...dxc6.

8.c3 ♕xb2 9.♕xd4 bxc6

Not 9...♕xa1? 10.0-0 f6 11.e5! dxc6 12.exf6 with a killing attack – Flear.

10.0-0

But not 10.♕xh8?? as 10...♕c1+ 11.♔e2 ♗a6+ mates!



10...♕xa1!?

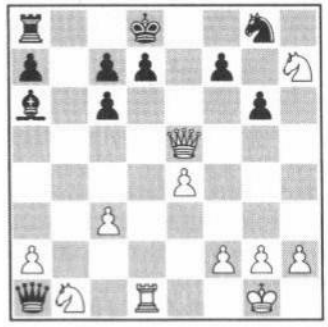
The latest development in this line. Instead, 10...♗a6 11.♕xh8 ♗xf1 12.♕xg8+ ♔e7 13.♕xa8 ♗d3! 14.h3 ♕xa1 15.♕xa7 ♗xb1 16.♕d4 ♗xa2+ 17.♔h2 ♗e6 was Zozulia-Radulski, Marseille 2004. In The

SOS Files of Volume 3 I quoted Glenn Flear who had noted upon the publication of his article in SOS-2 that instead of 11.♕xh8 the improvement 11.♘bd2! is very strong for White.

11.♕xh8 ♔f8 12.♘g5

Nothing is promised by the other knight leap 12.♘e5 ♕xa2 13.♕xh7? (13.♘g4 ♗a6 14.♘h6 was the right way to hold the balance) 13...d6! 14.♘xc6?! (14.♘xg6+ fxg6 15.♕xc7 was the best chance) 14...a5! (14...♗a6? 15.♘b4) 15.f4 (15.♖e1 ♗d7 16.♘d4 ♖b8 wins on the spot) 15...♗a6 (or 15...♗d7) 16.♖e1 ♗d3 17.e5 ♗e4! 0-1, Bjarnason-Radulski, Le Touquet 2007.

12...♗a6! 13.♘xh7+ ♔e7 14.♕e5+ ♔d8 15.♖d1



15...♗e2!

Radulski's novelty which is superior to 15...♖b8 16.♕g7 ♔e7 17.♕e5+ ♔d8 18.♕g7 ½-½, Kulovana-Golcman, Znojmo 2006. For, instead of taking the draw, White can win with 17.♕d4! which threatens mate and protects the rook, so that White can develop his b1-knight. For example: 17...d6 18.♘a3 ♕b2 (18...♕xa2 19.♕xa7+−) 19.e5, with a winning attack.

16.♕g7

Now 16.♖e1 can finally be met by 16...♖b8 and White has to acquiesce into the repetition with 17.♕g7 ♔e7 18.♕e5+.

16...♔e7 17.♕e5+ ♔d8 18.♕g7 ♔e7 19.♖e1!? ♖b8! and the players agreed a draw after **20.♕e5+ ♔d8 21.♕g7 ♔e7 22.♕e5+ ♔d8 23.♕g7 ♔e7 24.♕e5+ ½-½**

SOS Prize goes to ROT

SOS-8, Chapter 2, p.17

Mike Surtees is well-known in Great Britain for his idiosyncratic opening ideas. He has a name for those ideas as well: Revolutionary Opening Theory or ROT. The seventh round of the British Championship of 2008 saw Surtees combating the Caro-Kann with 2.♘e2. This SOS idea, championed by Nigel Short, was covered by Ruben Felgaer in SOS-8. In the hands of Mike Surtees this Caro-Kann line is a deadly weapon. Jovanka Houska fell victim to a terrible slugfest that rightly won the tournament's beauty prize – and the SOS Prize!

□ **Mike Surtees**
■ **Jovanka Houska**
Liverpool 2008

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5

4.b4!?

4.d4 is covered extensively by Ruben Felgaer in SOS-8. I'd like to quote him on this Wing Gambit: 'I confess that on several occasions I was tempted to play 4.b4 and only due to 4...♘c6! I never played it.' Jovanka Houska probably wasn't aware of Felgaer's verdict – at least she accepted the gambit pawn with

4...cxb4 5.d4

White can also play the immediate 5.a3.

5...♘c6 6.a3

6...e6

Closing in her Caro-Kann bishop – the pawn structure is French now. So, we may compare this Wing Gambit to that against the French. Some SOS-readers will remember that 1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 was extensively covered in SOS-1. Black has lost a tempo in the present game (c7-c6-c5). On the other hand, White's king's knight is developed to g3 (two moves) and not to f3. While f3 is the natural square for the knight (overprotecting e5 and d4, as well as the important squares g5 and h4), as Surtees demonstrates the knight has opportunities on g3 too – h5 is a sunny pasture enabling jumps to the opponent's kingside.

It is worth investigating 6...♗f5, while 6...f6!?, as in the game Bertholee-Peelen, Amstelveen 1994, is also interesting and may lead to enormous complications.

Finally, 6...bxa3 7.c3 e6 8.♘f4 ♘ge7 9.♗xa3 (9.♗d3 ♘g6 10.♘h5) 9...♘g6 10.♘h5 ♗d7 11.♗d3 ♗xa3 12.♘xa3 0-0 13.0-0 was Surtees-Arkell, Bradford rapid 2002, White had enough for the pawn (but later lost).

7.axb4 ♗xb4+ 8.c3

8...♗a5

This is always a tough decision. On the one hand, the bishop is placed actively on the queenside, and, more importantly, enables Black to develop her kingside as quickly as possible. On the other hand, the bishop will be sorely missed on the kingside as a defender. Should Black retreat to e7, then her king is safer, but developing the king's knight and castling becomes a serious problem. It is one of those catch-22 situations where you can't seem to win. So, while with hindsight, in view of what happens in the game, you could easily criticize Houska here, I don't think that this would be fair – and it also wouldn't reflect the real dilemma that Black is facing here.

8...♗e7 and now practice has seen:

– both 9.♘f4 g6 10.♗d3 a6 11.0-0 ♔f8!?, Rosito-Hernandez, Trelew 1995, and

– 9.♘g3 ♗d7 10.h4 (10.♗d3!) 10...f5 11.♗d3 a6 12.♘d2 ♘h6! 13.♘f3 ♘f7, Richmond-Lee, England tt-2 1998/99.

9.♘g3 ♘ge7 10.♘h5

This is the big advantage of having the knight on g3 instead of on f3. The beast is attacking g7 (and f6). Houska now castles into it, which is perhaps an almost losing decision. However, if 10...♖g8 was forced here, then the blame really rests elsewhere (8...♗a5, 6...e6, 4...cxb4, or even 1...c6? – just kidding!) for 10...♖g8 is not a move that any human should consider.

10...0-0 11.♗g5! ♕c7

12.♖xa5!

Very imaginative! White gets rid of the annoying pressure along the a5-e1 diagonal, before he sacs his way into the kingside. It was also possible to play 12.♘xg7! when after 12...♔xg7 13.♗f6+ ♔g8 14.♗d3! (or 14.♕d2 ♖d8 15.♕g5+ ♔f8 16.♗b5) 14...♖d8 15.♗xh7+ ♔f8 16.h4 the h-pawn just marches on.

12...♕xa5 13.♘xg7! f5

This Trojan horse cannot be accepted: 13...♔xg7 14.♗f6+ ♔g8 15.♕g4+! ♘g6 16.♕h5! ♘xd4 17.♗d3! followed by ♕h6.

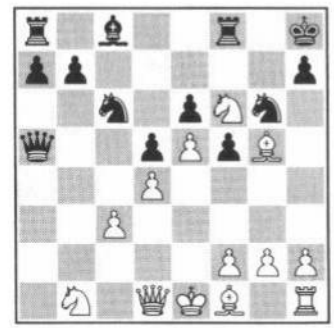
14.♘h5

14.exf6 was also much better for White, but Surtees is understandably tempted by a knight jump to f6.

14...♘g6

14...♕c7 was the best defensive try.

15.♘f6+ ♔h8?



Black had to take the knight. Now the beast continues on his prowl.

16.♘xh7! ♕c7

16...♔xh7 17.♕h5+ ♔g7 18.♕h6+ ♔f7 19.♕h7+ ♔e8 20.♕xg6+ ♖f7 21.♗e2 is a pretty straightforward line. White wins heavy material.

17.♘xf8 ♘xf8 18.♗f6+ ♔g8

By this stage White is of course completely winning. He is a pawn up with a huge positional advantage. Surtees finishes in style, by going all-out for the mate.

19.g4! f4 20.♗d3 b5 21.g5 b4 22.♕h5 ♘e7 23.g6

Black resigned.

CHAPTER 2

Dorian Rogozenco

The Blumenfeld Gambit

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5 5.♗g5 b4

In the Blumenfeld Gambit Black offers a pawn sacrifice in order to quickly develop his pieces. Accepting the sac usually leads to sharp positions, requiring from White both theoretical knowledge and very precise play. Therefore declining the offer with the move 5.♗g5 became extremely popular in practice, since it helps White to achieve simple and clear positions. The point is that after the most frequent answers from Black, namely 5...exd5 6.cxd5 d6 7.e4 a6 8.a4, and 5...♕a5+ 6.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 7.♘bxd2 White has clear and simple play indeed – in most cases with a long-lasting and safe plus.

It's true that after 5.♗g5 Black cannot (by sensible means) keep the game as sharp as he would like, but with the move 5...b4 he has at his disposal a possibility to keep play strategically complex and complicated. From the statistical point of view 5...b4 is not very popular, which suits our SOS-purposes of course. However, I would like to stress that the advance of the b-pawn has some strong adherents, like GM Lev Alburt and IM Jean-René Koch and it has been played occasionally by several grandmasters.

The move 5...b4 is strategically deeper than one might think. First of all it takes away the natural square – c3 – from the white knight. Secondly, and even more importantly, Black intends to prove with 5...b4 that the white bishop went too early to g5 and is rather mis-

placed there. Apart from the fact that with the black bishop on e7 White will always have to watch out for the tactical possibility ♘f6xd5, Black is often happy to close the centre completely (with d7-d6 and e6-e5). After that Black can use the exposed position of the bishop on g5 to achieve the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, which in such pawn formations favours Black strategically.

In most of the games White answers 5...b4 almost inevitably with **6.e4** (Variation II). However, in his attempts to fight for an advantage White should probably try to change something in the pawn structure. The strongest players that were facing 5...b4 in practice preferred to advance the a-pawn quickly, therefore it is important to have a close look at **6.a3** (Variation I) as well.

6.dxe6 fxe6 7.e4 looks like a reasonable option for White too, but this was played in practice only once. The game Chabanon-Koch, France 1998, continued 7...♕c7 8.c5 ♘g4 9.♗f4 ♘c6 10.♘bd2 g6 11.♘e4 ♘gxe5 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♗g3 ♗e7 14.♕d2 0-0 White doesn't have sufficient compensation for the pawn.

On move 10 it is probably better to play 10.h3 when after 10...♘h6 (10...♘gxe5? 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.♕h5+) 11.♗d3 (after 11.♗xh6 gxh6 White loses pawn e5) 11...g6 12.0-0 ♗g7 13.♖e1 0-0 14.♗h2 ♗b7 15.♘bd2 ♘f5 White at least keeps the material balance, although his control over square d4 secures Black sufficient play here as well.

Variation I – 6.a3

□ **Joel Lautier**
■ **Jean-René Koch**
Besançon 1999

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5 5.♗g5 b4 6.a3

6...h6 7.♗h4

In the correspondence game Chapman-Henri, 1987, White played more cautiously: 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.♕c2 ♘a6 9.e4 ♗d6 10.♘bd2 ♖b8 11.♖b1, but Black obviously enjoys a pleasant position. The game continued 11...0-0 12.♗d3 e5 13.0-0 ♗c7 14.♘e1 d6 15.g3 bxa3 (I would prefer Black after 15...♗h3 16.♘g2 ♖b6) 16.bxa3 ♗a5 17.♖xb8 ♘xb8 18.♘b3 ♗xe1 19.♖xe1 ♗h3 20.♘d2 ♘d7 21.♖b1 ♖b8 22.♖xb8+ ♘xb8 23.♕a4 ♕e7 and a draw was agreed.

7...exd5

This concrete approach is the idea behind the previous move. Black isolates the pawn d5 and wants to win it (e2-e4 will be answered by g7-g5, unpinning the knight, followed by ♘xe4).

Nisipeanu's 7...a5 is hardly the most optimal decision: the advance of the a-pawn is not a priority for Black, while the drawbacks are obvious – 7...a5 doesn't contribute to Black's development and it weakens many squares. Ivanchuk used it in the following way: 8.axb4 cxb4 9.♘d4 ♗e7 10.♘b5 d6 11.c5 and the Ukrainian GM emerged victorious in the rapid game Ivanchuk-Nisipeanu, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007.

8.cxd5 ♗b7 9.axb4 cxb4 10.♕d4

Please note that 10.d6 doesn't save the pawn: 10...♕b6 11.♗g3 ♘e4.

10...g5 11.♗g3

An interesting alternative is 11.d6, threatening a check on e5. Then strong looks 11...♗d5 (another option is 11...♗g7 12.♗g3 0-0 13.♕xb4 ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♘c6 15.♕d2 ♖e8 with compensation for the pawn) 12.♗g3 (12.♕c5+ now brings nothing, in view of 12...♗e6) 12...♘c6 13.♕e3+ ♗e6 14.♘d4 ♗g7 and if 15.♘f5 then 15...♘h5! 16.♘xg7+ ♘xg7 and Black will soon develop the initiative with ...♕f6, ...♘f5 etc.

11...♗xd5

12.♖xa7

After this Black achieves a clear advantage. Other moves are:

– 12.h4 ♘c6 13.♕e3+ ♕e7 14.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 15.hxg5 ♘e4 16.♗f4 ♗g7 which is clearly in Black's favour as well.

– The best for White is 12.♘e5 ♘c6 13.♘xc6 dxc6 14.h4 and now Black can choose between 14...♖g8, with a complicated position, where Black's chances are by no means worse, or 14...♘e4, which leads to a draw: 15.♕xh8 (after 15.♕e5+ ♕e7 16.♕xh8 ♘xg3 17.fxg3 ♕e3 Black has a decisive attack) 15...♗b3, threatening mate on d1. White must repeat moves: 16.♕e5+ ♗e7 17.♕h8+ ♗f8.

12...♖xa7 13.♕xa7 ♘c6 14.♕e3+ ♕e7 15.♕xe7+ ♔xe7!

A surprise, the king remains in the centre!

Now the bishop comes to the long diagonal, and everything works out perfectly for Black. White will soon give up material in order to complete development, but this won't help much: Black is already winning. I will give the remaining moves without notes.

16.e3 ♗g7 17.♘bd2 ♖a8 18.♗d3 ♖a1+ 19.♗b1 ♘e4 20.♔e2 ♘xd2 21.♘xd2 ♗xg2 22.♖d1 ♗xb2 23.♘b3 ♖a3 24.♘c5 ♗h3 25.♗e4 ♗c3 26.♗d6+ ♔e8 27.♖b1 ♗g4+ 28.f3 ♖a2+ 29.♔d3 ♘a5 30.♖d1 ♗h3 31.♗d5 ♖f2 32.♗g3 ♖f1 33.♖xf1 ♗xf1+ 34.♔c2 ♘c4 35.♗f2 ♘b6 36.♗b3 d5 37.e4 d4 38.♗g3 ♘c4 39.♗f2 ♘a3+

White resigned.

Variation II – 6.e4

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5 5.♗g5 b4 6.e4 d6

Subvariation A – 7.♘bd2

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1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5 5.♗g5 b4 6.e4 d6 7.♘bd2

In M.Gurevich-Alburt, Philadelphia 1989, White played 7.a3 here. Then 7...h6 8.♗xf6 (after 8.♗h4?! g5 9.♗g3 ♘xe4 White must sweat a lot to prove compensation for the pawn) 8...♕xf6 9.♕c2 ♘d7 10.axb4 cxb4 11.c5 (White correctly tries to use the weaknesses of opponent's queenside, otherwise he can easily end up being worse) 11...exd5 12.♗b5 (Gurevich mentions that 12.exd5 dxc5 13.♗b5 ♗d6 leads to an unclear position) 12...dxe4 13.♕xe4+ ♕e7 14.♘bd2 d5 15.♕xe7+ ♗xe7 16.♗c6 ♖b8 and now instead of 17.0-0 ♗xc5 18.♖fe1+ ♔f8 19.♗xd5 ♗b7, which was equal and led to a draw, Gurevich indicated that White could have obtained an advantage with 17.♘b3. However, all this is irrelevant from our point of view, since instead of 12...dxe4 Black could transpose into the double-edged position mentioned by Gurevich with 12...dxc5, when White has nothing better than 13.exd5 ♗d6.

7...♗e7

Perhaps 7...h6!? is also worth exploring.

8.h3

Only with this move can White fight for an advantage: White prepares the retreat of the bishop to e3.

– 8.♗f4?! 0-0 9.♗d3 e5 10.♗g3 ♘h5 is more than Black can usually dream of in such structures, Orr-Conquest, Dublin 1991.

– 8.♗d3 e5 (8...♘xd5? is premature due to 9.exd5 ♗xg5 10.dxe6 fxe6 11.♘xg5 ♕xg5 12.♗e4 d5 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♘f3, winning) 9.a3!? (a positional pawn sacrifice. The alternatives are harmless: 9.♗e3 ♘g4∓; 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6=) 9...bxa3 10.♖xa3 0-0 11.♕a1 ♘xd5 (11...a6 as in Bonin-Alburt, Philadelphia 1989, is not really necessary. After 12.0-0 ♘xd5 13.cxd5 ♗xg5 14.♘xg5 ♕xg5 15.♘c4 ♕d8 16.♖b3 a5 17.f4! White succeeded to create an attack on the kingside, although he misplayed it and lost) 12.cxd5 ♗xg5 13.♖xa7 ♖xa7 14.♕xa7 ♗a6 (14...♘a6!?) 15.♗xa6 ♗xd2+ 16.♘xd2 ♕a5 17.0-0 ♕xd2 with equal chances.

8...e5 9.♗e3

9...a5

I am not sure about this advance of the a-pawn. The standard plan 0-0, ♘e8, g6, ♘g7 and f5 looks like a decent option. The move a2-a3 can always be met with ♘a6. For instance: 9...0-0 10.a3 ♘a6!? (10...bxa3 11.♖xa3 ♘a6 followed by ♕b6 might be even better) 11.♗d3 ♘e8 12.0-0 g6 13.♗h6 ♘g7, with a complicated strategical game.

10.♗d3 ♘bd7 11.♘f1 a4

11...♘h5!?.

12.♘g3

Black now made a bad positional mistake with **12...a3?**

This allowed White to open the queenside conveniently: 13.bxa3 ♖xa3 14.♗c1 ♖a6 15.a3 g6 16.0-0 h5 17.♗d2 bxa3 18.♕c1 h4 19.♘e2 ♘h5 20.♖xa3 ♖xa3 21.♕xa3 0-0 22.♘c3 f5 23.♖e1, and here it became clear that Black has difficulties to create threats on the kingside.

Instead of 12...a3 I recommend:

12...g6 13.0-0 0-0
Black plans ...♘e8-g7, followed by f7-f5.
14.♗h6 ♖e8

White can't open the queenside, while Black will prepare the advance f7-f5. 15.♗c2 is answered by 15...♘b6. Black plans next to continue ♗e7-f8, with reasonable chances in a strategically complex position.

Subvariation B – 7.♗d3

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1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5 5.♗g5 b4 6.e4 d6 7.♗d3

7...♗e7

Notice that Black is not in a hurry to close the centre with 7...e5, which would be strongly met with 8.a3. It makes sense for Black to keep the tension for one or two more moves, since in case of an early a2-a3 it is sometimes useful for Black to have the possibility to open the centre.
8.dxe6
● In case of 8.e5 Black has an attractive exchange sacrifice: 8...dxe5!? 9.d6 ♕xd6 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♗e4 ♕xd1+ 12.♔xd1 ♗d7 13.♗xa8 e4 14.♔c2 (14.♘fd2? ♗xb2 15.♘b3 ♗a4) 14...exf3 15.♗xf3 ♘c6, with good compensation.

● Another important move is 8.a3. Then 8...0-0 9.axb4 cxb4

And now:
– after 10.0-0 the most accurate is 10...a5, and if 11.♘bd2, then 11...♘xd5 12.cxd5

♗xg5 13.♘xg5 ♕xg5 14.♘c4 exd5 15.exd5 ♘d7 16.♘xd6 ♕f6 17.♘c4 ♘c5 with even chances.

– While 10.dxe6 ♗xe6 11.♘d4 ♗d7 12.♘d2 ♘c6 13.♘xc6 ♗xc6 14.0-0 ♘d7 15.♗e3 ♘c5 16.♘b3 a5 17.♘d4 ♗b7 18.♗c2 ♗f6 19.f3 ♗a6 was about equal in Chabanon-Koch, Bischwiller 1999.

8...♗xe6 9.♘bd2 ♘c6 10.h3 0-0 11.♘f1

Zhukova wants to spare a tempo by transferring the knight to e3 before castling. This changes little: Black is well developed and his chances are already slightly preferable. The same holds for 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.♗e3 ♗f6.

11...♘d7 12.♗xe7 ♕xe7 13.♘e3 ♕f6 14.♕d2 ♘de5 15.♘xe5 dxe5 16.♘d5 ♕d8 17.0-0 ♕d6 18.♕e3 ♘d4

Both sides arranged their army almost identical, with the difference that Black can exchange his bishop for the opponent's centralized knight, while White can't do that. The Bulgarian grandmaster demonstrated in the course of the game that this factor is decisive. I will give the remainder without notes.

19.f4 ♗xd5 20.exd5 exf4 21.♕xf4 ♕xf4 22.♖xf4 f5 23.♖e1 g6 24.♖e7 ♖f7 25.♖e5 ♔f8 26.♖f1 ♖e8 27.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 28.♖e1+ ♔d7 29.♔f2 a5 30.♔g3 ♖f8 31.♔f4 h6 32.h4 ♔d6 33.♗b1 a4 34.♔g3 ♖a8 35.♔f4 g5+ 36.hxg5 hxg5+ 37.♔g3 a3 38.b3 ♖h8 39.♔f2 f4 40.♗d3 g4 41.♖e4 g3+ 42.♔g1

42...f3 43.gxf3 ♖h2 44.♖f4 ♖xa2 45.♗f1 ♖f2

White resigned.

In conclusion, I believe that 5...b4 is a good way to meet 5.♗g5 in the Blumenfeld. It is played considerably less frequently than other moves and might catch your opponent unprepared. Another important factor is that in spite of its apparent simplicity the move 5...b4 leads to complicated and little analysed positions, which require from White a lot of energy and efforts to handle them well.

CHAPTER 3

Jeroen Bosch

The Lewis Gambit

1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♗c5 3.d4

1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♗c5

This symmetrical defence is a pretty decent answer to the Bishop's Opening. Now 3.♘f3 ♘c6 transposes to the Italian Game, while 3.♘c3 leads to the Vienna. However, if you want to shock your opponent right from the start (and are willing to take a chance) then why not play

3.d4!?

There goes a valuable central pawn, you might think, but before you turn the page in disgust, please note that 3...exd4 allows 4.♗xf7+, while 3...♗xd4 is met by 4.♘f3, and White will get the bishop and an edge in development in an open position.

According to Benjamin and Schiller (in *Unorthodox Openings*, Batsford 1987) 3.d4 ought to be named after William Lewis (1787-1870) who was one of England's strongest players in that era. Clearly, White is wielding a double-edged sword, but his practical chances are really quite good.

Before we take a detailed look at 3.d4 I would like to present another great way to surprise your opponent, viz. the 'Evans move' 3.b4. Naturally, Black does not have to accept the challenge (we are no longer in the 19th century) and can play the solid 3...♗b6, but it makes sense to take the pawn.

After 3...♗xb4 4.c3 (the witty 4.f4 is known as the McDonnell Double Gambit. It is not to

be recommended because of the strong reply 4...d5!) we are at a crossroads.

Black has to decide where to put his bishop:

● 4...♗f8?! is a bit drastic. White obtains an edge with 5.♘f3 d6 6.d4 exd4 7.0-0 d3 8.♕b3 ♕d7 9.e5! ♘c6 (9...d5 10.♗xd5 c6 11.♗e4±) 10.♘g5! ♘h6 (10...♘xe5 11.♖e1+–) 11.e6! (or 11.♗xf7+ ♘xf7 12.e6), and White won in Kurenkov-Tishin, Tula 2003, after 11...fxe6 12.♗xe6 ♕e7 13.♖e1 ♔d8 14.♘f3 ♗xe6 15.♕xb7! ♖b8 16.♕xc6 ♗d7 17.♕a6 ♖b6 18.♕xa7 ♕f7 19.♕a8+ ♗c8 20.♗g5+ ♔d7 21.♕a4+ c6 22.♕d4.

● 4...♗c5 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 (White is not forced to take back. 6.♘f3!? ♘c6 leads to the classical main line of the Evans Gambit, which is certainly not Black's most attractive line of defence; also interesting is 6.♗xf7+!? ♔xf7 7.♕h5+, which had already been indicated by Staunton) 6...♗b4+ 7.♔f1 (7.♗d2?! ♗xd2+ 8.♘xd2 ♘f6 9.e5 d5 is fine for Black) 7...♗a5? (7...♕e7!) 8.♕h5! (8.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 9.♕h5+ should also favour White) 8...d5 9.♗xd5 ♕e7?! (9...♕f6) 10.♗a3 ♘f6 was MacDonnell-Boden, London 1869. Now MacDonnell could have obtained a winning position with 11.♕g5! instead of the game continuation 11.♗xf7+.

● 4...♗a5. Now we reach the main line in the regular Evans Gambit after 5.♘f3 ♘c6. However, note that 5...♘f6 and 5...d6 are also possible. The immediate 5.♕h5?! is no good because of 5...♕e7 6.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 7.♕xe5+ ♕e6 8.♕xa5 ♕xe4+.

This leaves White with two interesting options:

– 5.f4!? d6 (5...♘c6 6.♘f3 ♘f6 7.fxe5 ♘xe4 8.♕e2 ♘g5 9.0-0 0-0 10.d4 ♘xf3+ 11.♕xf3±, Heil-Podolnyy, Bad Wiessee 2003; 5...♕e7?! 6.♘f3 exf4 7.d4!? ♕xe4+ 8.♔f2 ♘f6 9.♘g5± was Macov-Stoilov, Bulgaria 1975) 6.♕b3 (or 6.♘f3 ♘c6 unclear) 6...♕d7 7.♘f3 ♘c6 is unclear, according to Minev in ECO.

– 5.d4 exd4 6.♕h5! d5 7.♗xd5 ♕e7 (7...♕f6 was already indicated by Schlechter as an improvement over 7...♕e7. In the correspondence game Jensen-Zagorovsky, 1991 there followed: 8.♘f3 ♗xc3+ – 8...♘e7!? 9.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 10.♕xa5 ♘ec6 is about equal – 9.♘xc3 dxc3 10.♘e5, with great attacking chances for White) 8.♗a3 ♘f6 is unclear according to ECO, but it seems to me that Black is better. Instead of 8...♘f6 the weaker 8...g6? was played in the correspondence game Dublin-Glasgow, 1874, when instead of 9.♗xe7? the Irish could have obtained a better game with 9.♕d1!. The old sources state that White is winning after the queen retreat, but the game is not entirely over after 9...c5 (9...♕f6 10.♕a4+ c6 11.♕xa5 cxd5 12.exd5 favours White) 10.♕a4+ ♕d7 11.♕c4, although White is clearly better.

Have you spotted 11.♕xa5? b6!, trapping the queen? A neat trick!

● 4...♗e7. This is indicated as best by no less a source than the ancient Bilguer. Now 5.♕h5?! g6 6.♕xe5 ♘f6 7.d4 ♘c6 8.♕f4 d5 is an old analysis by Keres that favours Black. Also insufficient is 5.d4, which is met strongly by 5...d5! 6.♗xd5 c6 7.♗b3 ♘f6. More interesting is 5.♕b3!?, when 5...♘h6 6.d4 ♗g5 (6...0-0) 7.♗a3 exd4 (7...♘c6) 8.cxd4 d6 9.♘f3 0-0 10.0-0 ♘c6 11.♘xg5 ♕xg5 12.f4 ♕d8 (12...♕f6 13.e5 ♕g6) 13.♕c3 gave White decent compensation in Siegel-Lehmann, Dotzheim 2002. However, Black has a lot of good alternatives along the way, as indicated in the notes.

Therefore White should probably settle for 5.♘f3 ♘c6, when we have reached a position from the Evans Gambit. 6.d4 ♘a5 7.♗e2 exd4 8.♕xd4 was (among many others) the famous game Kasparov-Anand, Riga 1995. Kasparov won in great style, but later improvements were found for Black. Thus 3.b4 could be used to trick Black into a defence that he is not familiar with.

Let us return to the position after 3.d4.

3...♗xd4

The alternative is 3...exd4. This receives a question mark in Harding's old book on the Bishop's Opening, but things are not that clear.

4.♗xf7+! (this is better than 4.♕h5 ♕e7 5.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 6.♕xc5 ♘c6∓) 4...♔xf7 (4...♔f8 5.♗b3 ♕e7 6.♘e2 ♕xe4 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.♘d2 is of course very good for White. White will retrieve his pawn on d4 and Black's king is stuck on f8, Hebert-Dumesnil, Defi 1997) 5.♕h5+ g6 6.♕xc5 ♘c6 leads to an interesting position. The material is equal, White's queen has been developed rather early and Black's king is not entirely safe. Play could continue: 7.♘f3 (7.♘e2)

Well, at least this is a fun position to play. Best now is 7...♘f6! (7...d6 is met by 8.♕d5+! ♔g7 – 8...♗e6?? 9.♘g5+ – 9.♘xd4±; and 7...♕e7 8.♕c4+ ♔g7 9.0-0 is just better for White). Let's look at a few options now.

Not very promising is 8.♗g5 d6 9.♕c4+ d5 10.♕b3 ♖e8, or even better 10...♔g7! 11.exd5 ♖e8+. White can just take on d4, but after 8.♘xd4 ♘xe4 9.♕d5+ ♔g7 10.♘xc6 dxc6 11.♕e5+ ♘f6 (11...♔f7 12.♗h6) 12.0-0 ♖e8 Black's activity compensates for his slightly inferior pawn structure.

Very natural is 8.0-0 d6 (8...d5 is another option; 8...♖e8 can be met by 9.♗g5!? or by 9.e5 d6 10.exd6 ♕xd6 11.♕xd6 cxd6 12.♘a3 with a slight endgame advantage) 9.♕c4+, and now Black must find 9...d5! to reach an approximately equal position after 10.exd5 ♕xd5 11.♕xd5+ ♘xd5.

White can also play the immediate 8.e5, and now:

– 8...d6 9.♕c4+ (not 9.exd6 ♖e8+ 10.♔f1 cxd6∓) 9...d5 10.♕e2 ♘e4 11.♘bd2 ♗f5 12.♘xe4 (12.0-0 ♖e8 is unclear) 12...dxe4 13.♘g5+ ♔g7 14.♘xe4 ♕d5! 15.♘g3, equal.
– 8...♖e8 9.0-0 d6 10.exd6 ♕xd6 (10...cxd6 11.♕b5±) 11.♕xd6 cxd6 12.♘a3± reaches the same position as above after 8.0-0 ♖e8 9.e5 d6, etc. In case of 12...♖e2 13.♘b5 ♖xc2 14.♘bxd4 ♘xd4 15.♘xd4 White keeps a slight advantage in the ending.
Black certainly has chances to equalize after 3...exd4, but there are more than enough practical chances for White, and this is clearly not the refutation of 3.d4.

4.♘f3

4...♕f6

A 'romantic' line of defence. Black holds on to his pawn without caring about misplacing his queen or neglecting his development.
4...♘c6 is the natural move. White should now use the opportunity to transfer into the Max Lange Gambit (not to be confused with the Max Lange Attack) with 5.♘xd4 ♘xd4 (5...cxd4 6.0-0) 6.0-0 d6 (or 6...♘f6 7.f4 d6) 7.f4 ♘f6 8.fxe5 dxe5 9.♗g5

This is a tabiya for the Max Lange Gambit. The regular move order is 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.0-0 ♘f6 (now 4...d6 is actually a good way to avoid the entire line!) 5.d4!? ♗xd4 6.♘xd4 ♘xd4 7.f4 d6 8.fxe5 dxe5 9.♗g5, and we have reached the diagrammed position. Mihail Marin feels that White has a strong initiative here, which is why he does not cover this line in his *Beating the Open Games* (a repertoire book for Black). He instead advises Black to go for 5...exd4 6.e5 d5, when 7.exf6 is the better-known Max Lange Attack. Not many black players will be familiar with the intricacies of the Max Lange Gambit (as it can be avoided via the regular move order), so reaching this position via the Bishop's Opening may certainly be considered a success. Such tricky move orders are typical of the opening weapons available to the modern player. In *Dangerous Weapons 1.e4 e5* (Everyman 2008) John Emms makes a case for this particular gambit, while it has also been covered by Lev Gutman and Stefan Bücker in *Kaissiber*. I am not going to analyse it deeply here, but let me indicate a few lines:
– 9...♗g4?! 10.♗xf7+! ♔xf7 11.♕xg4

♘xc2 12.♕h5+ ♔e7 13.♘c3, and White has a winning attack.

– 9...♕e7 10.♘a3 ♗d7!? 11.♕d2 0-0-0 12.♕f2!, White has sufficient compensation.

– 9...♗e6 10.♘a3 ♕e7 11.c3 ♗xc4 12.♗xf6! gxf6 13.♘xc4, and White has obvious compensation. Both Emms and Gutman/Bucker eventually reach the conclusion that White is better.

Black has other moves at his disposal, and the lines are certainly more complicated than I have indicated above, but I do feel that this transposition into the Max Lange Gambit is an interesting way to make optimal use of 3.d4 in the Bishop's Opening.

If Black plays 4...♘f6 then 5.♘xd4 exd4 6.♕xd4 ♘c6 should be OK for Black, but 6.e5! d5 7.♗b5+ favours White.

7...♘fd7 and now, rather than taking on d4, White has 8.♕g4±. If Black plays 7...♗d7, then 8.exf6 ♗xb5 9.fxg7 ♕e7+ (9...♖g8 10.♕xd4 ♕e7+ 11.♗e3) 10.♗e3 ♖g8 11.♕xd4, and White is better.

5.0-0!?

For only one pawn White is ahead in development and has opened files and diagonals. Black is in obvious danger.

5.♘xd4 exd4 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.f4 d6 8.♗b5 ♗d7 is good for Black according to Schiffers. Clearly, 5.0-0 is a much cleverer move order.

5...♗b6

5...♘c6 6.♘xd4 ♘xd4 (6...exd4 7.f4) 7.f4 ♘e6 8.♘c3 must be great for White. The first player also has his chances after 5...d6 6.♘xd4 exd4 7.f4!? (7.c3!? ♘c6) 7...♘c6 8.e5!?.

6.♘c3 c6?

Black understandably wants to protect the d5-square, but the difference in development will tell. Black had to play 6...♘c6 when 7.♘d5 ♕g6 8.♗e3 is really awkward for Black. Please note that White wins on the spot after 6...d6 7.♗g5 ♕g6 8.♘xe5!.

7.♗g5 ♕g6

Now White wins easily with **8.♘xe5! ♕xg5 9.♘xf7 ♕c5** and now **10.♗b3 d5 11.♘xh8 ♘f6 12.exd5 cxd5 13.♘xd5** White is completely winning, of course. **13...♘bd7 14.♕e2+ ♔f8 15.♖ae1 a6 16.♘xf6 ♘xf6 17.♘f7 ♗d7 18.♘g5 ♖e8**

19.♕xe8+! ♘xe8 Or 19...♗xe8 20.♘e6+. **20.♘xh7** Mate!

CHAPTER 4

Dimitri Reinderman

The Retreat Variation

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8!?

The diagrammed position comes about after 1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 (called the Brooklyn Variation or Retreat Variation), and it looks like an improvement on the starting position for White. After all, he has gained space and influence in the centre, while his queen and bishop are free to move.

However, the pawn on e5 weakens square f5, turning that same pawn into a target for Black. Indeed, ...d6 is on the cards. Taking on d6 then involves a loss of space, while allowing Black to take on e5 might mean a weak pawn, that can easily be attacked by the black pieces. All this is quite similar to the regular Alekhine, which provokes the question: why retreat to g8 instead of playing 2... ♘d5?

In general, d5 is a better square for a knight than g8, but a knight on d5 is much more vulnerable to attacks. In the Alekhine the beast usually moves to b6, when redeploying it to c7 via c8 is not uncommon. But why go ♘g8-f6-d5-b6-c8-e7 if you can also go ♘g8-f6-g8-e7?

There is also a concrete difference. One of the main lines against the Alekhine is the system with ♘f3 en ♗e2, but after 1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 3.d4 d6 4.♘f3 ♗g4 5.♗e2 dxe5 6.♘xe5 ♗xe2 7.♕xe2 Black can take the pawn on d4, which would not be possible with a knight on d5.

Of course the retreat to g8 is a form of 'undevelopment', and with normal moves

White should obtain at least a small advantage in development. And this advantage in development will give White the initiative. However, not everyone will be able to put this initiative to good use. After 2...♘g8 Black has the common advantages of a SOS: the surprise value, White will have to think for himself; and Black will have more knowledge of the variation (though you don't have to learn a lot of theory to play it). And maybe White will be provoked by getting the odds of two moves...

The normal continuation for White is 3.d4 and then Black has a choice. The most popular move is 3...d5, which leads to a position which could also arrive after 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c7 (yes, moving the pawn from c6 back, also 1.e4 ♘c6 2.d4 d5 3.c5 ♘b8 gives the same position). Of course Black normally plays 3...♗f5 instead of the illegal c6-c7, when many top grandmasters play 4.♗e3 and Black is to move. The same position would arrive after 1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 3.d4 d5 4.♗e3 ♗f5 (what else?), but then with a pawn on c7 and White to move! Surely this must be good for White. Therefore in this article I will stick with 3...d6, the choice of grandmaster Chanda Sandipan, who played the Retreat Variation in the 2008 Gausdal Classics.

□ **Vasilios Kotronias**
■ **Chanda Sandipan**
Gausdal 2008

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 3.d4 d6 4.♘f3 ♗g4 5.h3 ♗h5

Black can also take the knight. The position after 5...♗xf3 6.♕xf3 c6 7.exd6 e6 reminds me of the so-called 'Fort Knox' Variation in the French, when Black plays 3...dxe4, 4...♗d7, and ...♗c6 eventually taking a knight on f3 or e4. If White doesn't take on d6, Black can take on e5 and attack the pawn.

However, Chanda's move is more ambitious and invites his opponent to play

6.e6!?

Just like in certain variations of the Alekhine, White sacrifices his e-pawn so that the bishop on f8 has problems developing. Also White can hope to get his knight from f3 to e6 via g5. Personally, I like the extra central pawn for Black.

A good alternative is 6.g4 ♗g6 7.♘c3, for example 7...e6 8.♗f4 d5 9.♗d3 c5 10.♗xg6 hxg6 11.♕d2 as in T.Ernst-Welling, Copenhagen 1988, when White has a big lead in development, though it's not so easy to do something with it.

For 6.♗e2, see the next game.

6...fxe6 7.g4 ♗g6

Instead 7...♗f7 8.♘g5 ♘h6 lets Black keep his extra pawn. White can prevent this possibility by playing 6.g4 ♗g6 7.e6.

8.♘g5

Natural enough but not the best move in my opinion.

– Black was fine in Gruchacz-Benjamin, New York 1980, after 8.♗d3 ♗xd3 9.♕xd3 ♘c6 10.♕b3 ♕d7 11.♕xb7 ♖b8 12.♕a6 ♘f6, but stronger is

– 8.♗c4!, when 8...d5?! 9.♗d3 is what White wants. Perhaps Black should play 8...♗f7 9.♘g5 (after 9.♕e2 ♘f6 10.♗xe6 ♗xe6 11.♕xe6 ♕d7 12.♕b3 b6 Black has weaknesses, but so has White) 9...d5 10.♗b5+ (to prevent a future ...♘c6. 10.♘xf7 ♔xf7 is not dangerous for Black) 10...c6 11.♗d3 ♘d7 12.♕c2 ♕b6 13.c3 ♘gf6, when White is just a little better (14.♘xe6 ♘e4).

8...♕d7 9.♕e2

A nice variation is 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♕f3!? (10.♕xd3 ♘f6 11.♕b3 c5 is unclear) 10...♕c6 (10...♗g6? 11.♕xb7 ♕c6? 12.♕c8 mate!) 11.♕f7+ ♔d7 12.♕xe6+ ♔d8 13.d5 ♕xc2 14.♘f7+ ♔e8 15.♕c8+ ♔xf7 16.♕e6+, with a draw by perpetual!

9...e5 10.d5

White wants to keep a bind, but he won't be able to if Black plays well. After 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♗g2 ♘c6 12.0-0 0-0-0 13.♘c3 e6 chances would have been about equal.

10...♘f6 11.♗g2 h6?!

The main problem for Black in this position is square e6. Black plays h6 so his bishop can go to f7, but I would prefer 11...c6!? 12.♘c3 (12.c4 weakens d3, which is a problem for White after 12...cxd5 13.cxd5 ♘a6) 12...cxd5 13.♘xd5 ♘c6 and while Black is not yet threatening to play ...e6, he soon will (after ...♖c8 or ...♘d4 for example).

12.♘e6 c6 13.c4 ♗f7

Forcing White to take an undeveloped bishop.

14.♘xf8 ♖xf8 15.♘c3 e6 16.dxc6 ♘xc6

Black has solved the problem of his space disadvantage and the weakness of e6 in particular. Now he has to attend to the position of his king though. He can go to the queenside, but White will get an attack with b4.

17.♗e3 ♕e7 18.0-0 g5 19.♖fd1 ♖d8

So Black decides to keep his king in the middle, at least for now. It is safe there at the moment, because of all the centre pawns, but things are rather crowded in Black's camp.

20.b4

20...♖g8?

I suppose the idea of this move is to make room for the king to go to g7, but the rook was fine on f8, while the bishop is not so fine on f7.

So a better version of the same idea would be 20...♗g6. If White plays like in the game, the knight on f6 is defended, which is a big difference. White can win back a pawn with

21.b5 ♘d4 22.♗xd4 exd4 23.♖xd4, but after 23...e5 24.♖d2 ♔f7 White is just a tad better. Apart from that, Black can also consider 20...♘xb4 21.♗xa7 ♗g6 followed by ♔f7, when he still has the extra pawn.

21.♘b5 a6? 21...♘xb4 is still better.

22.♗xc6+! bxc6 23.♘a7!

Surprisingly, Black has no good way to defend c6. **23...♕d7 24.♕f3 ♘d5!?** Trying to mess things up. After 24...♖g6 25.♕xc6 ♕xc6 26.♘xc6 ♖c8 27.♖xd6 ♘e4 28.♖ad1 ♘xd6 29.♖xd6 ♖f6 30.♘xe5 White is also winning. **25.cxd5 cxd5 26.♗b6 ♖b8 27.♖ac1! e4** The tactics work for White: 27...♖xb6 28.♖c8+ ♔e7 29.♖dc1 and wins. **28.♕e3 ♕a4 29.♗c7 ♖xb4 30.♗xd6 ♖c4 31.♘c8** Black resigned. A nice win for Kotronias, but Black was fine after the opening.

□ **Christian Sandor**
■ **Stefan Wehmeier**
Munich 1993

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 3.d4 d6 4.♘f3 ♗g4 5.♗e2

White sensibly continues with his development as in the main line of the Alekhine. Surprisingly, he is now more or less forced to sacrifice a pawn!

5...dxe5!?

Schiller recommends 5...e6 6.0-0 d5 and says in his 1998 book *Unorthodox Chess Openings*: 'Black has every reason to be satisfied with this position, which resembles a French Defence except that Black's light-squared bishop has been developed outside the pawn chain.'

Probably that remark was written before 1998, because by then it was already known that these kinds of positions are not so easy for Black. For example, in Bosch-Van Mil, Wijk aan Zee 1998, Black was to move and had a pawn on c6, but still White obtained a good position from the opening. Instead of 6...d5, I would prefer 6...♘c6!?, putting pressure on e5.

6.♘xe5

Instead 6.dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7.♗xd1 e6 is fine for Black.

The pawn sacrifice is stronger, and White will have at least enough compensation for the pawn. However, Black can play for an advantage by trying to neutralize White's initiative.

6...♗xe2 7.♕xe2 ♕xd4 8.0-0

At first sight 8.♕b5+ looks strong, since 8...c6 9.♕xb7 ♕xe5+ 10.♗e3 wins for White, but Black has 8...♘d7 9.♘xd7 0-0-0! 10.0-0 ♕xd7, when chances are about equal.

8...♘d7 9.♘f3 ♕b6 10.♗e3 c5

10...♕xb2 11.♗d4 ♕b4 12.♘c3 ♕a5

13.♖ab1 gives White a big lead in development.

11.♘bd2 ♕c7 12.♕c4

12.♘c4 ♘gf6 13.♖ad1 e6 14.♘fe5 ♗e7 15.♗f4 ♘xe5 16.♗xe5 ♕c6 17.♘d6+ ♔f8 is a plausible variation, which leads to a position where some players will prefer to have the extra pawn, and others the white initiative.

12...e6

13.♗f4 ♗d6

Here 13...♕c6 is a little more careful.

14.♗xd6 ♕xd6 15.♖ad1 ♘gf6?

Black should play 15...♕a6 After 16.♕xa6 bxa6 17.♘c4 ♘gf6 18.♖d6 ♔c7 19.♖xa6 ♘d5 White has a tiny advantage.

16.♘e4 ♕a6 17.♘d6+ ♔e7 18.♕h4?

18.♕f4 gives strong threats against f7, for example: 18...h6 19.♘xf7 g5 20.♘7xg5 hxg5 21.♘xg5, with a powerful attack.

18...h6 19.♖fe1 ♖hd8 20.♘g5 ♘e5

Now White's initiative slowly disappears, while Black keeps his extra pawn.

21.♘ge4 ♘g6 22.♕g3 ♘xe4 23.♘xe4 ♕c6 24.f3 b6 25.h4 ♔f8 26.h5 ♘e7 27.♘d6 ♖d7 28.♘c4 ♘f5 29.♕f4 ♘d4?

29...♖xd1 30.♖xd1 ♘d4 is better, as then there is no threat of a knight fork on e5 left.

30.♔f2 ♖d5 31.♘e5 ♕b7 32.c3 ♘c6 33.♘g4?

33.♖xd5 exd5 34.♕f5 (threatening 35.♕h7) will win back the pawn.

33...♖ad8? 33...♖xd1 34.♖xd1 ♖d8 keeps the extra pawn. **34.♖xd5 ♖xd5 35.♖xe6 ♕d7 36.♖g6?!** Here 36.♖xh6 gxh6 37.♕xh6+ ♔e7 38.♕f6+ ♔f8 39.♕h8+ gives a draw. **36...♖xh5 37.♕d6+ ♕xd6 38.♖xd6 ♘e5 39.♘xe5 ♖xe5 40.♖d7 a5 41.♖b7 ♖e6**

Black has a safe extra pawn in the rook ending, but because of the active white rook the position is closer to a draw than a win. The game eventually ended in a draw on move 69.

□ **Laszlo Hovanecz**
■ **Ernö Dede**
Hungary tt-2 1992/93

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 3.d4 d6 4.exd6 cxd6

The other recaptures are also possible. After 4...exd6 5.♘c3 ♘f6 the position is the same as after 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘f3 ♘xe4 5.♘c3 ♘f6. White is a bit better, also if he would play with c4 before ♘c3.

4...♕xd6 5.♘c3 is a transposition to a favourite defence of Tiviakov, the 3...♕d6 Scandinavian. He wrote an article about it in SOS-6. It might actually be more correct to say that 4...♕xd6 transposes to 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.d4 ♕d6, when White still has the option to play c4, but again it's a position with just a small advantage for White.

The choice of recaptures is just a question of taste.

4...cxd6 is the move if you prefer to have a asymmetrical pawn structure.

5.♘f3 ♗g4 6.♗e2 e6 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.c4 ♗e7 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♗e3 ♘bd7

A flexible middlegame position has arisen where White has more space, but it's not so easy for him to make progress.

11.b4?!

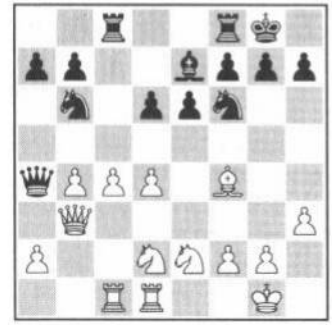
Better is 11.h3 (useful anyway) 11...♗h5 12.g4 ♗g6 13.♘h4. It looks weakening to play g4 with the king on g1, but it's more important that White gets the pair of bishops and keeps his space advantage.

11...♘b6 With the positional threat of 12...♗xf3. **12.♕b3 ♖c8**

Now 13...♗xf3 14.♗xf3 ♖xc4 is an annoying threat. Black can be pleased with the outcome of the opening. We have a rich middlegame with about equal chances. What follows is anything but forced.

13.♘d2 ♗xe2 14.♘xe2 ♘g4!? 15.♖ac1 ♕c7?! 16.♗f4 ♕d7 17.h3 ♘f6 18.♖fd1 ♕a4?!

White should now play 19.b5: after 19...♕xb3 20.axb3 pawn a7 would be weak. He prefers to keep the queens on the board, but overlooks a tactic.



19.♕b2? ♘xc4 20.♘xc4 ♖xc4 21.♖xc4 ♕xd1+ 22.♔h2 ♕d3 23.♖c7 ♘d5 24.♖xe7? After 24.♖xb7 ♕a6 25.♖d7 ♖a8 26.b5 ♕c8 27.♖xe7 ♘xe7 28.♗xd6 ♘d5 White at least has a pawn for the exchange. **24...♘xe7 25.♗xd6 ♖e8 26.b5 ♘f5 27.♗e5 f6 28.♗c7 ♖c8** Black is winning easily now. **29.b6 axb6 30.♘f4 ♕e4 31.♕xb6 ♕c6 32.♘xe6? ♕xb6 33.♗xb6 ♖c6 34.♗c5 ♖xe6 35.g4 ♘e7** White resigned.

□ **Desider May**
■ **Salo Flohr**
Bad Sliac 1932

Salo Flohr was one of the strongest players of the world in the 1930s. Desider May is an unknown player, but he would be a strong master or weak grandmaster by today's standards.

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘g8 3.d4 d6 4.f4

Similar to the Four Pawns Attack of the Alekhine (where the white c-pawn is on c4, and Black's king's knight on b6).

4...dxe5

There are other possibilities, like 4...♗f5, 4...g6 and even 4...h5. Flohr goes for the sharpest continuation.

5.fxe5 c5

Again, 5...♗f5 is possible and probably better than 5...c5.

6.c3

Solid but unambitious. Stronger is 6.d5! e6 (threatening 7...♕h4+) 7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 (8...♘xd7 9.♘f3 ♘e7 10.c4 exd5 11.cxd5 ♕b6 12.0-0 0-0-0 13.♘a3 is good for White) 9.c4 exd5 10.cxd5 c4 11.♘c3 ♗c5 12.♘f3 ♘e7. The question in a position like this is if White's central pawns are strong or weak. I think they are strong here and White is better, but Black also has realistic winning chances because the pawns might drop.

6...cxd4 7.cxd4 ♘c6 8.♗e3 ♗f5 9.♘f3 e6 Now Black has no problems. **10.♘c3 ♘ge7 11.♗b5 a6 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3**

Black has the better bishop, but White has more space, so chances are still equal.

13...♘f5 14.♗f2 h5 15.♖d1 ♘b4 16.♕e4 ♘d5 17.♘xd5 ♕xd5 18.♕xd5 exd5 19.♔e2 ♗e7 20.♖c1 ♔d8

20...♔d7 would be more normal. Perhaps Flohr was afraid of some trick with e6+, though it doesn't work.

21.♖c2 ♖c8 22.♖hc1 ♖xc2+ 23.♖xc2 ♖h6 24.♗e1 g5 25.♔d3 Draw.

A little early to agree a draw: though the position is equal it is not dead equal, so I would have played on if I were Flohr.

Conclusion: objectively the Retreat Variation will often lead to a position with a slight advantage for White. However, this is hardly decisive and in my opinion the 'SOS-factor' is high: you don't have to know a lot of theory, while the opponent will feel surprised or even provoked. So if you want a surprise weapon against 1.e4: retreat!

CHAPTER 5

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Steinitz's Anti-French

1.e4 e6 2.e5

All the great champions have been 'bitten' by certain ideas, i.e. their favourite reactions to particular openings, even though theory disapproves of them. The first world champion Wilhelm Steinitz had the idea after **1.e4 e6** of avoiding the classical French structures by **2.e5.** In general, the idea is rather simple – to avoid the closed structures, typical of the French Defence. Steinitz liked a more open game and I think that such a way of playing may be of interest to many players even today.

2...c5 Switching to 'semi-Sicilian' lines.

A few other logical plans should be mentioned:

● **2...f6** immediately attacking that cheeky pawn. 3.d4 c5 (3...d6 4.exf6 ♘xf6 5.♘f3 ♗e7 6.♗d3 0-0 7.♘bd2 b6 8.♕c2 Schwarz-Albin, Vienna 1890. White could also consider taking on d6 on the fourth move) 4.♗d3

– Now after 4...cxd4 5.♕h5+ g6 6.♗xg6+ hxg6 7.♕xh8 ♕a5+ 8.♘d2 ♕xe5+ 9.♘e2 ♘e7 10.♕h4 White has the advantage.

– 4...f5 5.g4!? cxd4 6.gxf5 ♕a5+ 7.c3 ♕xe5+ 8.♘e2 ♘c6 9.0-0 ♗c5 10.♖e1 ♕f6 11.♘d2! exf5 12.cxd4 ♗e7 13.♘f3 ♔d8 14.♗g5 ♕f7 15.♗xe7+ ♘gxe7 16.♕d2 h6 17.♘e5!, with the initiative for the sacrificed pawn, Pollock-Tarrasch, Hastings 1895.

● **2...b6** 3.f4 ♗b7 4.♘f3 f6 5.d4 ♘h6 6.♗d3 f5 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.c4 c5 9.d5! (an excellent 'pseudo-sacrifice' of a pawn) 9...exd5 10.cxd5 ♗xd5 11.♗xf5 ♗b7 12.♗d3 0-0 13.♕c2, with an obvious advantage, Steinitz-Blackburne, London 1883.

● **2...d5**

Perhaps most logical for a player of the French. Now 3.d4 transposes to the Advance Variation, while 3.♘f3 c5 4.b4 is the French Wing Gambit that was covered in SOS-1. Of course Steinitz' intention was to avoid 'French' structures with 3.exd6 when Black has two plausible replies:

– 3...cxd6 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 ♗e7 6.♗d3 0-0 7.0-0

In Gusev-Khasin, Moscow 1955, play continued 7...♘c6 8.♖e1 ♕c7 9.♘c3!? (9.c3) 9...a6 10.a3 ♗d7 11.♗g5 ♖fe8 12.♘e4 ♘xe4 13.♖xe4 f5 14.♖h4!?.

While, 7...b6 8.♖e1 ♗a6 9.♗xa6 ♘xa6 10.♕e2 ♕c8 11.c3 ♘c7 12.♘bd2 ♕a6 was Dumpor-Raicevic, Kladovo 1991, and here 13.♕xa6 ♘xa6 14.a4 ♖fc8 15.♘e4 would have been correct, with the more pleasant game for White.

– 3...♗xd6 4.d4 ♘f6 (if 4...♘d7 there can follow 5.♕g4 and Black is forced to weaken his dark squares with 5...g6; if he plays 4...♗d7, then after 5.♘f3 ♗c6 6.♘c3 ♘d7 7.♗b5! ♗xb5 8.♘xb5 ♘gf6 9.♘xd6+ cxd6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗f4 ♕e7 12.c4 ♖ac8 13.c5! White has the advantage, Döring-Brychcy, Germany 1992) 5.♘f3 0-0 (also possible is 5...b6 6.♗b5+ c6 7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 ♗b7 9.♘c3 a6 10.♕e2 ♘bd7 11.♗g5 ♕c7 12.♖ad1 c5, with a complicated game) 6.♗d3 ♘bd7 (6...b6 is also not bad, as in the above variation) 7.0-0 c5 8.♘c3 cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♘c5 10.♗e2 a6 11.♗g5 ♗e5 12.♗e3!

The game is complicated – f2-f4 and ♗e2-f3 is threatened.

3.f4

This is the most logical decision – here playing for d2-d4 is illogical.

3...♘c6

It is also possible to launch an attack on the centre by 3...d6 4.♘f3 dxe5 5.fxe5 ♘h6 6.♗b5+ (it is desirable either to exchange this bishop or else place it at g2 after 6.g3!?, which is also interesting) 6...♗d7 7.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8.d3 ♘f5 9.♘c3 ♘c6 10.♗f4

The position is very interesting and needs testing in practice.

4.♘f3 b6

Here 4...f6 is also logical: 5.exf6 ♘xf6 6.g3 ♗c7 7.♗g2 ♕c7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘c3 a6 10.b3 b5 11.♗b2 ♗b7 12.d3

Black's position looks good, but he has an irreparable problem in his pawn structure – the d7- and c6-pawns, Steinitz-Winawer, Vienna 1882.

Another possibility is 4...a6 5.g3 d6 6.exd6 ♗xd6 7.♗g2 ♘f6 8.0-0 0-0 9.d3 ♕c7 10.♘bd2 b5 11.b3 ♗b7 12.♗b2 ♗e7 13.♕e2 ♖fd8

And here in the game Eliskases-Harum, Ebensee 1933, White chose the interesting 14.♗c5!? ♘xe5 15.fxe5 ♘d7 16.♖f2!, switching to an attack on the f-file.

5.g3 ♗b7 6.♗g2

6...d5

Again Black can try 6...f6 7.exf6 ♘xf6 8.0-0 ♗e7, and here White can arrange his pieces as in previous variations by b2-b3, ♗c1-b2, d2-d3, ♘b1-d2 and ♕d1-e2, or simply play d2-d3, c2-c3, ♕d1-e2 and ♘b1-d2-e4.

7.exd6 ♗xd6 8.d3 ♘ge7 9.♘c3 ♘f5 10.♘e4 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.c3 ♕c7

Steinitz-Sellman, Baltimore m-3 1882.

And here the correct set-up was 13.♕e2 ♖ad8 14.g4! ♘d6 15.♘g3 followed by ♗c1-e3 and ♖a1-d1.

In conclusions: Generally speaking, we cannot promise White an advantage here, but the most attractive feature for White is the possibility of taking the play into semi-open positions which are quite different to French structures.

CHAPTER 6

Arthur Kogan

Slav: the Bellon-Murey Variation

Why not echo 5.a4?

The original 5...a5 was often played by the creative GMs Murey and Bellon, so I would propose to call it the Bellon-Murey Slav. The idea of 5...a5 is not only to get firm control of the b4 square for Black's pieces, but also to wait for White to disclose his plans before developing ♗c8 – since on ...♗f5 or ...♗g4, White has ♘e5! with annoying ideas like f3, e4 or even g4.

□ **Goran Dizdar**
■ **Arthur Kogan**
Porec tt 1998

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 a5!?

This move was a surprise for my opponent, who usually likes to take his time.

6.e3

Other options are 6.e4 ♗g4! and 6.♘c5.

6...♗g4

Also playable is 6...♗f5!?, as tried by my 'amigo' Juan Bellon.

7.h3

In the next game we will study 7.♗xc4 e6.

7...♗h5 8.g4!?

This move is critical, White tries to demonstrate that Black has lost a tempo with 5...a5 in comparison to other Slav lines.

8...♗g6 9.♘e5

White is after the two bishops. Black should search for quick counterplay. I must say the weaknesses created by g4 gave me hope.

9...♘a6!?

Usually b4 is the place for the bishop in this line, but having the c2 square in mind inspired me for quicker action. Also playable is 9...♘bd7 10.♘xg6 (10.♘xc4 e6 11.♗g2 ♗b4) 10...hxg6 11.♗xc4 e6.

10.♗xc4 ♘b4

11.♔f1!?

Played because after castling kingside his king will never be safe with that pawn on g4. White wants to keep his rook on h1 to assist the h4+h5 or g5 plans.

● Interesting is 11.f4 e6 12.f5 (12.0-0 ♘d7!) 12...exf5 13.gxf5 ♗h5 14.♕b3, and now 14...♕c7! followed by ...0-0-0 looks very promising for Black.

● 11.0-0 e6 12.e4 (12.f4 ♘d7!) is the engine's idea to take the centre, but I like Black after 12...♗xe4 13.g5 ♗c2! 14.♕e2 (14.♕f3 ♕xd4) 14...♗f5! (14...♘d7 15.♘xf7; 14...♘fd5 15.♗xd5 cxd5 16.♕b5+±) 15.gxf6 gxf6, and with h3 hanging and ...♖g8 or ...♘c2 ideas in mind Black seems to have great play for his lost piece.

11...e6 12.♕f3

After 12.♔g2 ♕c7 Black prepares castling queenside and ♗d6. If 12.h4 then 12...♗c2 13.♕f3 ♗d6.

12...♗d6 13.♘xg6 hxg6 14.g5!

To obtain square e4, and hoping for a future h4+h5 plan to get an edge on the kingside. Other moves are worse: 14.e4? ♘c2; and 14.♔g2 ♗c7! prevents the important ♖d1 and e4 plan (not 14...♕e7 15.e4 ♘c2 16.e5) 15.♖d1 ♕d6!.

14...♘fd5 15.♘e4! Not 15.e4 ♘b6 16.♗b3 ♗e7!. **15...♗e7!?** Keeping in mind the important ...f5 or ...f6 break to kick this annoying knight. **16.h4 ♕b6** Time to castle soon! **17.b3**

Somewhere around here White offered a draw, but although the position was far from clear, I had only one result in mind!

On 17.h5 I planned something like 17...♘c2 18.♖a2 (18.♖b1 ♘a3) 18...gxh5 19.♖xh5 (19.b3 ♘cb4) 19...0-0-0! 20.♖xh8 (20.♕xf7 ♕b4! 21.♕xe6+ ♔b8−+) 20...♖xh8 21.♗d2 (21.♕xf7 ♕b4 22.♕xe6+ ♔b8−+) ♔b8 22.♕xf7 ♘cxe3+! and White is in trouble (23.fxe3 ♖f8).

17...f5! 18.gxf6 gxf6

19.♘c5!?

White sacrifices a pawn to open the position for his bishops, mainly ♗c1.

Also critical was of course 19.♕g4. However, after 19...0-0-0! 20.♕xe6+ (20.♕xg6 ♔b8) 20...♔b8, planning ...f5, Black seems to have the safer king and nice play for only one pawn!

19...♗xc5 20.dxc5 ♕xc5 21.♗b2 0-0-0

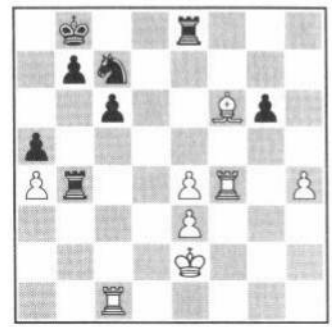
21...e5 is the engine's choice, but 22.h5! g5 23.♕f5! seems no fun to this human!

22.e4! ♘c7 23.♖c1

White has played in a dynamic and creative way to get nice play for the lost pawn, but his king is still not safe, so I am ready to give back material to get closer to him!

23.♗xf6 ♖hf8 24.♖c1 (24.e5 ♘cd5 looks like trouble for White) 24...♖d7 25.♔g2 ♖df7 26.♗xe6+ ♘xe6 27.♖xc5 ♖xf6 28.♕g4 ♖xf2+ 29.♔g1 ♖f1+ 30.♔g2 ♖1f2+ is a draw.

23...♔b8! For if 23...♕d6 then 24.♗xf6 ♖hf8 25.♖g1!. **24.♗xe6!?** White was short of time already. Better was probably 24.♗e2! ♕b6 25.♗xf6 ♖df8. **24...♕d6 25.♗c4 ♕d2! 26.♕e2** Preferable was 26.♖b1! ♘d3 27.♗xd3 ♖xd3 28.♕c2 ♖c8 29.♗xf6 ♕xe2+ 30.♔xe2 ♖d6. **26...♕f4 27.♕e3 ♕xe3** I also got short on time, so I couldn't clearly assess 27...♖xh4 28.♖xh4 ♕xh4 29.♕f3! ♖d6 30.e5!, which seems good for White. **28.fxe3 ♘d3!** Now Black has got the better chances since he has fewer weaknesses. **29.♗xd3 ♖xd3 30.♗xf6 ♖f8** 30...♖e8! was more precise. **31.♔e2 ♖xb3 32.♖hf1** Better was 32.♗d4!. **32...♖e8 33.♖f4** And here in a big mutual time-trouble, I saw a nice trap... **33...♖b4** 33...♘e6 34.♖g4 ♖b4 was maybe best, but contains no trap!



34.♖g1?

And he fell for it! Correct was 34.e5! ♖b3 (34...♖xf4 35.exf4 ♘d5 36.♗g5 ♔c7=) 35.♖g1 ♘d5 36.♖f3 (36.♖d4 ♘xf6 37.exf6 ♖exe3+ 38.♔d2 ♖f3 39.♖xg6 ♖b2+ 40.♔e1 ♖ff2) 36...♘c3+ 37.♔d2 ♘xa4 38.♖xg6 ♖b2+ 39.♔d3 ♘c5+ 40.♔c3 ♘a4+ equal.

34...♘d5!

Suddenly White loses material, Black's pieces coordinate well with all the pins!

35.♔f3 ♘xf4 36.exf4 ♖b3+ 37.♔g4 ♖xe4

The rest is just technique, but I had to be careful until the time control.

38.♗e5+ ♔c8 Not 38...♔a7, as published in ChessBase. **39.♔g5 ♖ee3 40.♔xg6 ♖g3+** Now luckily there was extra time, so I could take a breath and calculate my win. **41.♖xg3 ♖xg3+ 42.♔f5 b5 43.♔e4 ♖h3 44.♗f6 bxa4 45.f5 a3 46.♗a1 ♖h1** **0-1**

□ **Mikhail Ulibin**
■ **Gerard Welling**
Port Erin 2002

Dutch IM Gerard Welling is another 'lover' of this line, here he won against an opponent rated about 200 Elo points higher. That's inspiring, right!

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 a5 6.e3 ♗g4 7.♗xc4 e6

8.h3

● 8.0-0 is also played. Here I would recommend the natural 8...♗b4. Black just wants to finish his development in a natural way, and his very solid position which has no weaknesses can't be underestimated.

– 9.♗e2 ♘bd7 10.♕c2 (10.♗d2 0-0 11.♘a2 ♗d6 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 e5 was OK in Blokh-Bykhovsky, Rishon-le-Zion 2004) 10...0-0 11.e4 (11.♘e1 ♗xe2 12.♘xe2 ♕e7 – 12...c5!∓ – 13.♘d3 ♗d6 14.f3 c5∓, Bialy-Stefanek, Biala Podlaska 1994) 11...♖c8 12.e5 ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 ♘d5 14.♖d1 ♔h8 15.♗e4 f5 16.exf6 ♘7xf6 was unclear in G.Buckley-Menadue, Swansea 1995.

– 9.♕c2 0-0 10.♖d1 ♘bd7 11.e4 and now 11...♕c7! is a good idea to avoid ♗f4 and prepare at the same time the ...e5 break. 12.♗g5 ♗h5 13.♖ac1 h6 14.♗xf6 ♘xf6 15.e5 (White got more space but the bishop on h5 or g6 has an important defensive role!) 15...♘d7 16.♘e4 ♖ae8 17.♘g3 ♗g6 18.♘h4 ♗h7 19.♕g4 ♕d8! 20.♘h5 (20.f4 ♔h8 21.f5 ♘b6 22.♗b3 ♕g5) 20...♕g5 21.♕xg5 hxg5 22.♘f3 ♗e7 23.h3 ♘b6 24.♗b3 ♖d8∓, Purdon-Menadue, Exmouth 2000.

● 8.♕b3 ♗xf3 (otherwise ♘e5 will be annoying, and anyway Black seems in time for counterplay, ♕b3 can be misplaced so far from the kingside) 9.gxf3 and here I would recommend 9...♗b4 10.♗d2 0-0 with ...♘bd7 and ...c5 in mind, Black seems in time to get nice play!

8...♗h5 9.g4

Another nice example was 9.0-0 ♗b4 10.♕e2 0-0 11.♘a2 ♗e7 12.♖d1 ♘c4 13.♕c2 ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♘f6 15.♘c3 ♘a6 16.♗f1 ♕c7 17.f4 ♘d5 18.♗g2 ♘ab4 19.♕c2 f5 and Black controls the centre (and White's pair of bishops as well), Haimovich-Postny, Tel Aviv 1998.

9...♗g6 10.h4

The most ambitious line, which leads to very sharp play.

10...♗b4

The e4 square must be under control to allow ...♗g6 an escape!

Not 10...h5? 11.♘e5 or 10...h6 11.♘e5 ♗h7 12.♕b3 (but not 12.g5 hxg5 13.hxg5 ♗c2!).

11.h5 ♗e4 12.g5 ♘d5 13.♗d2 ♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♗e7 15.♖g1

15.♖h4 was an interesting option: 15...♗xf3

(15...♗d5 16.♗d3!) 16.♕xf3 ♗xg5 17.♖g4 ♘d7 18.♖b1 ♖b8, White seems to have some compensation, but Black is OK, since it is hard to create direct threats.

15...♘d7 16.g6?!

A logical move, but it favours Black in the end. 16.h6!? ♖g8!? or 16...g6 17.♕e2 ♗xf3 18.♕xf3 ♗xg5 19.♖b1 is one direction to investigate.

Another thought is 16.♗b3 planning ♗c2. Play is unclear after 16...♗xf3 17.♕xf3 ♗xg5 18.♕g4 ♗h6.

16...hxg6 17.hxg6 ♗xg6 18.♗xe6 ♗e4!

Very important, and probably the only way to refute White's attack!

19.♗c4 19.♖xg7 fxe6. **19...♗f6** Even better looks 19...♖h3! 20.♗e2 ♔f8 21.c4 ♗h4! with big pressure on White's king. **20.♗c1 ♘b6 21.♘d2** 21.♗d3 ♕d5. **21...♗g6 22.♗a3 ♗e7?!**

22...♕c7∓ with ...0-0-0 to follow favours Black, who will have a safe king – compare it to White's king!

23.♕b3

23.♗xe7 ♕xe7 24.♕b3 ♘xc4 25.♘xc4 0-0-0 26.♕b6! seems dangerous for Black, but still unclear after 26...♖h5 27.♘xa5 ♖dd5! 28.♘c4 (28.♕b4 c5!) 28...♖dg5 29.0-0-0! ♕e6.

23...♗xa3 24.♕xa3 24.♖xa3 ♕c7. **24...♕c7 25.♗e2**

25...♘d5!

White has more pawns in the centre, but any push will give Black's knight a nice square on b4 or on f4.

25...0-0-0 26.c4! leaves the knight out of play.

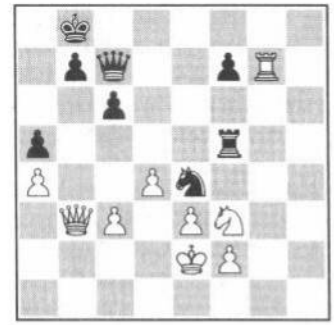
26.♘c4 0-0-0 27.0-0-0?

Correct was 27.♘e5 ♖h2 28.♗f3!, with a complex position.

27...♖h2

Now in this difficult position, White seems to face more problems than Black. I guess that the coming moves were influenced by time-trouble. Anyway, White is suffering a tough defence and he was the last to blunder.

28.♖d2 ♔b8 28...♘f6!. **29.♗f3 ♘f6 30.♘e5 ♗e4?!** 30...♘e4!. **31.♖xg7 ♗xf3 32.♘xf3 ♖h1+ 33.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 34.♔xd1 ♘e4 35.♕b3 ♖d5 36.♔e2 ♖f5**



37.♖g2??

A big blunder, but after such a tough game – mainly because of Black's original play – I would expect that anybody as White could lose his head somewhere.

Meanwhile, objectively White is better after 37.♕c2 ♕c7 38.c4.

37...♖xf3! 38.♕c2 38.♔xf3 ♘d2+. **38...♖xf2+! 39.♖xf2 ♘xf2 40.♕f5 ♘h1 41.♕h7 ♘g3+ 42.♔d3 ♔a7 43.♕h3 f5** **0-1**

□ **Lucien van Beek**
■ **Gerard Welling**
Belgium tt 2000/01

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.a4 a5 6.e4 ♗g4 7.♗xc4

7.e5!? is also an important idea: 7...♘d5 8.♗xc4 e6 9.0-0 ♘d7 (9...♗e7 10.♘e4 0-0 or 10...♘a6 is fully playable).

– 10.h3 ♗h5 11.♘e4 (11.♘xd5 cxd5 is a good French for Black with his usual bad bishop on h5!) 12.♗b5 ♗e7 13.♗f4 0-0 14.♖c1 ♘b8! (an important idea! The knight belongs to c6 to press d4!) 15.g4 ♗g6 16.♘e1 ♘c6∓ 17.♗e3, ½-½ Fedorowicz-Schroer, Philadelphia 1997) 11...h6 (11...♗e7) 12.♗d3 ♘b4 13.♗b1 ♘b6 14.g4 ♗g6 15.♗f4 ♘6d5 16.♗g3 ♕b6 with unclear play in D.Ilic-Nisman, Belgrade 1989.

– 10.♘e4 ♕b6!? (10...♗e7 11.♗g5 f6, or 11...♗xg5 12.♘exg5 ♕xg5 13.♘xg5 ♗xd1 14.♖fxd1 ♔e7 15.♘e4 f6 both give Black no reason to complain either) 11.♗e3 ♗e7 12.♘g3 (12.h3 ♗f5 13.♘g3 ♗g6 seems very OK for Black) 12...h5!? (or 12...♖d8!) 13.♗xd5 (13.h3 ♘xe3 14.fxe3 h4 15.♘e4 ♗f5 16.♘d6+ ♗xd6 17.exd6 ♕b4) 13...cxd5 14.h3 ♗xf3 15.♕xf3 g6! (15...h4 16.♘h5) 16.♘e2 ♖c8 17.♖fc1 ♖c6 18.g4?! hxg4 (stronger is 18...♕b4! 19.♔g2 ♘b6) 19.hxg4 ♔f8 was equal in Lipinsky-Welling, Berlin 1999.

7...e6 8.0-0

8.♗e3!? to protect d4 is another logical move, see the next illustrative game.

8...♗b4

8...♗xf3?! 9.gxf3 favours White.

9.♗g5

● I had to face 9.e5 in a critical last round of the Antwerp open, and somehow (morning was a good excuse!) I was outplayed, but by a strong player: Jeroen Piket! Let's see the course of that game: 9...♘d5 10.♘e4 (10.♘xd5 cxd5 11.♗b5+ ♘c6 12.♕d3 ♕b6 13.♗e3 ♗xf3 14.gxf3 0-0∓, Czerwonski-Tomaszewski, Lublin 1988) 10...♘d7 11.h3 (11.♗g5 ♕b6 12.♗e2 h6 13.♗c1 0-0-0 14.♗d2 f5!⇄ 15.exf6?!, Geller-Murey, Amsterdam 1986, 15...gxf6!) 11...♗h5 12.♘g3 ♗g6 13.♘g5!? (13.♕e2 h6!) 13...h6 (13...♘7b6) 14.♘5e4 and this was a critical moment where I went wrong, missing more than one good way to get nice play.

– 14...0-0 15.f4 f5!.

– 14...♕h4 15.f4 f5.

– 14...♘7b6 15.♗b3 0-0 16.f4 ♘e7! also seems very OK for Black.

– I played 14...f5?! and was clearly worse after 15.♗xd5! cxd5 16.♘d6+ ♗xd6 17.exd6 0-0 18.♗f4 ♘b6 19.♕b3 ♗e8 20.♖fc1 ♘c4 21.♖xc4! dxc4 22.♕xc4 ♕c8 23.♕b3, Piket-Kogan, Antwerp 1998.

● 9.♖e1 ♘bd7 10.♗f4 0-0 11.h3 ♗h5 12.g4

♗g6 13.e5 (13.♗d3 c5!?) 13...♘d5 14.♗xd5 cxd5 15.h4 ♗xc3 (15...h5 16.♘g5) 16.bxc3 f6 and White is in trouble, Bourne-Menadue, Exeter 1999. Great play by another expert in this line Menadue, he is an English player of about 2200, but he often plays this line like a GM!

● 9.♕d3 ♘bd7 10.e5 ♘d5 11.♘e4 ♘7b6 12.♗b3 ♗f5 13.♕e2 h6 seems very OK for Black, Franic-Vukelic, Porec 1998.

9...♗xf3 Logical, but also interesting is 9...h6 10.♗h4 ♗xf3.

10.gxf3

Or 10.♕xf3 ♕xd4 11.♖ad1 ♕e5! 12.♗f4 ♕h5 and White's compensation is not so evident. Bad is 11...♕xc4 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♕xf6 0-0 and now rather than settling for a draw with 14.♕g5+ ♔h8 15.♕f6+ White has 14.♖fe1! winning.

10...♗e7 11.♕b3 ♘bd7 12.♖ad1

In case of the greedy 12.♕xb7 Black plays 12...♖b8 13.♕a6 (13.♕xc6 ♖b6−+) 13...♕c7 14.♗e2 ♘g4 15.fxg4 ♗xg5.

12...0-0 13.♔h1 ♘h5!

Black is almost always happy to exchange the dark-squared bishops in this line!

14.♗e3 ♕c7 15.d5 exd5 16.exd5 ♘e5 17.♗e2 ♘f6 18.♖g1 ♘g6

A very good square for this knight to block White's attacking chances and to control f4.

19.♕c4 ♗d6 20.♘e4

20...♘xd5!? An interesting exchange sacrifice. 20...♘xe4 21.fxe4 ♗xh2 22.♖g2 ♗f4 was also possible, I guess. **21.♘xd6 ♕xd6 22.♗c5 ♕e5 23.♗xf8 ♖xf8 24.b3?** Far from evident was the correct defence: 24.♕e4! ♕xb2 25.♖b1 ♕d2 26.♖xb7 ♘gf4 27.♕e5! g6 28.♖b2! ♕c3. **24...♖e8 25.♗f1 ♕b2! 26.♖g2 h6** Now Black has a clear advantage owing to his superior pieces, the knights are doing no worse than the white rooks for sure! **27.♕d4 ♕xb3 28.♗c4 ♕xf3 29.♗xd5 cxd5 30.♔g1 ♖e4! 31.♕a1 ♖g4 32.♖xg4 ♕xg4+ 33.♔f1 ♘f4 34.♕d4 ♕f3 0-1**

An impressive attack by Black!

□ **Oleg Chernikov**
■ **Petr Haba**
Debrecen 1988

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 a5 6.e4 ♗g4 7.♗xc4 e6 8.♗e3

A logical move to defend the d4-pawn, and prevent ...♗xf3 ideas.

● 8.♕d3!? ♘a6! 9.♗e3 ♘b4 10.♕e2 ♗e7 11.♖c1 0-0 12.h3 ♗h5 13.0-0 h6 14.♖fd1, Lugovoi-Kir.Georgiev, Rethymnon 2003, and now Black should have played 14...♕c7! 15.d5 exd5 16.exd5 ♖ad8 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♘b5 ♖xd1+ 19.♕xd1 ♕c8.

● 8.h3 ♗h5 9.g4 ♗g6 10.♕e2 ♗b4 11.0-0!? and now I accepted the pawn sacrifice with 11...♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘xe4 and obtained a strong position after 13.♗a3 ♘d7 14.♖ac1 (14.♖fe1 was better but Black is OK after 14...♕c7) 14...h5! 15.♔g2 hxg4 16.hxg4 ♕c7 17.♖h1 0-0-0, Lerner-Kogan, Israel tt 2008.

8...♗b4

9.♕c2

– 9.♗d3 ♘bd7 10.0-0 0-0 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♘xd5 cxd5 13.♖c1, E. Robert Dehault-Andonov, Sautron 2002, and now 13...♘b8! would have given Black good play.

– 9.h3 ♗h5 10.♗d3 ♘bd7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖c1 e5! 13.g4 exd4 14.♘xd4 ♗g6 15.f3 ♖e8 (15...♕c7!) 16.♗f2 ♘f8 was OK for Black in Farago-Hebbinghaus, Hamburg 1995.

9...♘bd7

It is important to avoid 9...♗xf3?! 10.gxf3 ♘bd7 11.♖g1 g6 12.f4! – that's why the queen on c2 is well placed here!

10.♗e2

After 10.0-0 0-0 11.♘e5 ♗h5 Black is OK, and a draw was agreed in Piket-I.Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee 1994.

Critical is 10.♘e5, which leads to risky play for White after 10...♘xc5 11.dxe5 ♘d7 12.f4 g5! 13.fxg5 ♘xe5 14.♗f1 h6! 15.gxh6 ♖xh6! 16.♕d2 (16.♗xh6 ♕h4+ 17.♕f2 ♕xh6∓) 16...♕h4+ (16...♖h7!∓) 17.♕f2 ♕xf2+ 18.♔xf2 ♖h7 19.♘a2 ♗e7 20.♗d4 ♗d6 21.h3 0-0-0∓, Chabanon-Luce, Toulouse 1995.

10...0-0 11.0-0 ♗xf3!

An important idea using the fact that the bishop is not on c4, so f7 is no longer a target!

12.♗xf3

12.gxf3 c5! will start the fight for the centre and the f4-square.

12...e5! Fighting for central control and – no less important – the black squares again! **13.♖fd1** White gets nothing either after 13.d5 ♗xc3 (13...♖c8!?) 14.bxc3 cxd5 15.exd5 e4 16.♗xe4 ♘xe4 17.♕xe4 ♘f6 18.♕d4 ♘xd5. **13...exd4 14.♗xd4 ♕e7**

The best square for the queen: to control e5 and press e4. Not 14...♕c7? 15.♘d5±.

15.g3 ♖ad8 16.♗g2 ♗c5!

It is is important to exchange the best piece White has, so now the black squares get weaker, and Black's knights can start to party!

17.♗xc5?! 17.♘e2 ♗xd4 18.♘xd4 ♕b4.

17...♕xc5 18.♖d2 ♘e5 19.♖ad1 ♕b6

20.♘b1?! 20.♘e2 seems to give more chances to equalize, but 20...♖xd2 21.♖xd2 ♖e8 and Black retains the better chances. **20...h5! 21.♕c3 ♘fg4!** Black's initiative gets bigger and bigger. **22.♖d4 ♖xd4 23.♕xd4 c5! 24.♕c3 ♖d8** 24...c4!? with the idea of ...♘d3 is also not bad! **25.♖xd8+ ♕xd8** The rest of the game needs no comment, just to sit and enjoy the dance of his pieces, mainly the knights! **26.♗f3 ♕d6 27.♔g2 b6 28.♗e2 ♘c6 29.♗c4?** 29.h3∓ **29...♕d1 30.♕d3 ♕e1** Winning a pawn and the game. **31.♕f1 ♕xe4+ 32.♔g1 ♘ge5 33.♗e2 ♘d4 34.♘c3 ♘df3+ 35.♗xf3 ♘xf3+ 36.♔g2 ♕b7 37.♕c1 ♘h4+ 38.♔h3 ♕d7+ 39.♔xh4 ♕g4** Mate.

□ **Pedro Lezcano Jaen**
■ **Alfonso Romero Holmes**
El Corte Ingles 1990

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 c6 3.d4 d5 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 a5 6.♘e5

Another critical way to face 5...a5. In fact, it is not so easy to work out a playable line.

6...♗e6!?

Played in SOS-style! This original idea of GM Romero Holmes is extremely rare.

The common method is 6...♘bd7 7.♘xc4 and here there is a choice between the creative, but suspicious, 7...♕c7 and 7...♘b6. Murey has adopted both approaches, but I prefer 6...♗e6.

7.e4

7.e3 ♘bd7 8.♘xc4 g6 will be a comfortable version of the Grünfeld, where White has no reason to smile (nor has ♗c1).

7...♘bd7 8.♘xc4 ♗xc4

8...g6 seems too risky after 9.d5 cxd5 10.exd5 ♗f5 11.♘e3.

9.♗xc4 e5!

Again fighting for the centre, mainly for the black squares d4, c5 and e5!

10.dxe5

It is important that even the attractive looking 10.♕b3 ♗b4! gives Black dangerous counterplay after 11.♗xf7+ ♔f8, and now the complications are OK for Black:

– 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♗c4 ♕d4 14.♗e2 ♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♕xd3, and White king seems weaker than Black's. Especially if he tries to defend his extra pawn with 16.f3? as Black has 16...♘xe4!! 17.fxe4 ♕xe4+ and the attack wins in all lines. Instead 16.♗e3 ♘xe4 17.♖d1 ♗xc3+ 18.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 19.♕xc3 ♘xc3 20.♖d7 b5, is a very complex position to assess; although White's compensation is evident, I guess that chances are about equal, for example: 21.axb5 cxb5 22.♗d4 b4 23.♗xg7+ ♔e8 24.♖b7 ♖d8!

– 12.♗e3 exd4 13.♗xd4 ♕e7 14.♗c4 ♕xe4+ 15.♗e3 ♘c5 16.♕a2 ♘d3+

(16...♘xa4 17.0-0!; 16...♕xg2 17.0-0-0 ♖e8∞) 17.♔f1 ♗xc3 (17...♕f5 18.♖d1 ♘f4∞) 18.♕a3+ (18.bxc3 ♘g4 19.♗d4 ♖e8 threatening mate on e1 gives Black good play) 18...♗b4 19.♕xd3 ♕xd3+ 20.♗xd3 ♘d5. Black has a promising endgame with his well-placed light pieces, soon ...♔e7 will bring his ...♖h8 to the party as well!

10...♘xe5 11.♕xd8+ ♖xd8

But here Black has not much to complain either, since although White has the pair of bishops and more centre, Black has nice squares for his pieces – mainly the bishop on b4 and the knight on e5 – and the fight for square d4 is still on!

12.♗e2 ♗b4 13.f3 ♔e7

We have a typical Slav endgame with about equal chances.

14.♗e3

14...♘fd7!?

Black is playing for a win. More solid seems 14...♖d6!? (with ...♖hd8 and a possible ...♘d3 this looks very OK for Black). After 14...♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♖xd3 16.♔e2 ♖d7 17.♗b6 ♖a8 play is equal.

15.f4! ♘g6 16.0-0-0 ♘c5 17.♔c2 f6

An important move that must be played to stop White's central pawn mobility!

18.g3 Now White should be better, but he needs to play accurately.

18...♘f8 19.b3

19.♘a2! was the only idea to fight for an edge! After 19...♘xe4 20.♘xb4 axb4 21.♗d3 f5 22.♗xe4 fxe4 23.♗c5+ White is better, therefore Black should go for 19...♘fd7 20.♘xb4 axb4 21.♖d4 b3+ 22.♔c3 ♖a8 23.♖a1±.

After 19.♖xd8 ♔xd8 20.♖d1+ Black plays 20...♔c7 21.♘a2 ♘fd7.

19...♘fd7 20.♗f3 ♘a6 21.♗e2 ♘ac5 22.♗f3 White is satisfied with a draw, but... **22...♘e6!** Black wants more! **23.♘e2 ♗c5! 24.♗xc5+**

A serious positional mistake. White needs his bishop to control the key black squares. Still, 24.♗c1 ♘b8 (24...g5!?) with ...♘a6 and ...♘b4 gives Black nice play.

24...♘dxc5

No more problems for Black, he has great play for his knights, and White – with his bad bishop on f3 – might get in trouble quickly.

25.♔c3 b5! 26.axb5 cxb5 27.♖d5

It appears that Black forgot this one, but...

27...b4+ 28.♔b2

28...a4! Dynamic play by Black to use his knights! **29.bxa4 ♘xa4+ 30.♔b3** Winning a pawn? **30...♘ec5+ 31.♔xb4 ♖b8+** No, White is under a crushing attack on his king! **32.♔c4 ♖hc8! 33.♔d4 ♖b3!** Preventing the escape to e3! Now White's king is hopeless. **34.♗g4 ♖d3+ 35.♔c4 ♘b2+ 36.♔b5** And resigned without waiting for the mate after 36...♖b3+ 37.♔a5 ♘c4!.

CHAPTER 7

Jeroen Bosch

Slav: a Marshall Gambit of Sorts

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.e4 ♗b4 5.♗d2!?

□ **Vladimir Potkin**
■ **Pavel Govciyan**
Rohde 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.e4 ♗b4

This is not a bad line for Black if he wants to avoid the heavily analysed and dangerous main line of the Marshall Gambit 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 6.♗d2 ♕xd4 7.♗xb4 ♕xe4+ and White obtains a dangerous initiative with 8.♗e2 (while 8.♘e2 is an alternative).

5.♗d2

An excellent surprise, aiming to trick the trickster into the main line of the Marshall Gambit again.

Quite possibly Black's best is now 5...dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♕xd4 7.♗xb4 ♕xe4+, transposing into the main line mentioned above.

In practice 5.e5 c5 (or 5...♘e7) 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♘e7 and 5.cxd5 exd5 6.e5 are White's most popular responses to 4...♗b4. Play is of a strategical nature, and Black is not without chances in either line.

With 5.♗d2 White opts for tactics, something Black was actually trying to avoid with 4...♗b4!

5...dxc4

If Black does not want to transpose into the regular lines with 5...dxe4 (and that's what he doesn't want, otherwise he wouldn't have played 4...♗b4 in the first place) then accepting the pawn sacrifice with 5...dxc4 is

the critical reply. Other moves look passive and ought to give White at least a comfortable opening edge.

Thus, 5...♘f6 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.♘f3 b6 8.cxd5 exd5 9.♗d3 ♗a6 10.♗xa6 ♘xa6 11.♕a4 ♗xc3 12.♗xc3 ♕c8 13.0-0 was very bad for Black in Conquest-Fowler, England tt 2008/09.

And after 5...♗xc3 6.♗xc3 dxe4 the move 7.♕g4 is uncomfortable for Black.

The main alternative for taking on e4 or c4 is **5...♘e7**, when White has two options. He can continue his development or immediately provoke the exchange on c3:

● 6.♘f3

And now:

– 6...♗xc3?! 7.♗xc3 dxe4 8.♘g5.

– 6...♘d7 7.♗d3 dxc4 8.♗xc4 c5 9.a3 cxd4 10.axb4 dxc3 11.♗xc3 is much better for White – just look at that dark-squared bishop(!), B.Kovacevic-Godena, Solin 2005.

– 6...0-0 7.♗d3 c5 8.dxc5!? ♘a6 9.0-0 ♘xc5 10.♗e3!? ♘xd3 11.♕xd3 ♗xc3 (11...dxe4) 12.bxc3 b6 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♖ad1! ♗b7 15.e5 ♘g6 16.♖fe1 ♖e8 17.♗d4 was a slight edge for White in Miton-Kaidanov, Lubbock 2008.

● 6.a3 ♗xc3 (or 6...♗a5 and now 7.♘f3 after all, when White has the extra option to play b4 at some point) 7.♗xc3.

I like the centre and White's bishop pair.

Let's look at some practical examples:

– 7...♘g6 8.e5 b6 9.♘f3 ♗b7 10.h4 (10.cxd5 ♕xd5) 10...c5 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.h5 ♘e7 looks quite attractive for White, Gozzoli-Tregubov, Paris 2005. Pushing the h-pawn with 13.h6 is rather nice now.

– 7...dxe4 8.♕g4 ♘f5 9.♕xe4 ♘d7 10.♘f3 0-0 11.♗d3 (11.g4 ♘f6 12.♕f4 is Dautov's recommendation, which also looks good) 11...b5 12.b3 (12.g4? bxc4 13.♗c2 ♘f6 14.♕xc6 ♖b8 15.gxf5 ♗b7 16.♕xc4 ♗xf3∓, Danilov-Cosma, Bucharest 2001) 12...♗b7 13.0-0 ♖b8 14.♕f4, with a clear strategic edge in Erdös-Cosma, Predeal 2007.

6.♗xc4

This is clearly the most logical move, White takes back on c4 and sacrifices the d4-pawn for a huge lead in development. White is rather successful with the text, so there is no real need to investigate the alternatives. Yet, I do want to draw your attention to two other moves (especially the first seems interesting and has that extra special SOS flavour):

● 6.♕g4!? ♘f6 (this must be critical. 6...♗f8 7.♗xc4 ♕xd4 8.♕e2 ♕d8 9.♘f3 was Halkias-Mastrovasilis, Athens 2004. Compared to our main game White has won an additional tempo – the black bishop is on f8 instead of on b4. I am sure that in his days Paul Morphy would have considered White's enormous lead in development as decisive) 7.♕xg7 ♖g8 8.♕h6 ♖g6 (8...♕xd4 9.♘f3

♕d8 10.e5±) 9.♕e3 ♘g4 (more or less forced I suppose) 10.♕e2 ♕xd4 11.♘f3 ♕c5 12.a3 (12.h3) 12...♗a5 13.h3 ♘f6 14.e5!? (14.g4!?; 14.0-0-0) 14...♗xc3 (14...♘d5 15.♘e4) 15.bxc3 (15.♗xc3 ♘d5 16.♗d4 ♕a5+) 15...♘d5 16.♕xc4!? (16.h4!?) 16...♕xc4 17.♗xc4 ♖xg2 was D.Cramling-Matros, Sweden tt 1999/2000. Even though Black has managed to reach the endgame, White's lead in development, bishop pair and strong pressure on the dark squares more than compensate the minimal investment. In the game Dan Cramling now went wrong with 18.♘g5. Instead, 18.♗d3 would have emphasized that the ending is still very difficult for Black.

● 6.♘f3!? (White holds on to his central pawn) 6...♘f6 (6...b5 sets up a popular pawn formation in modern chess. White has good compensation after any of the next moves: 7.a4, 7.b3 or 7.♕c2. White is better after 6...c5 7.a3 ♗xc3 8.♗xc3) 7.e5 ♘d5 8.♗xc4 ♘b6 9.♗b3 (9.♗d3!?) 9...0-0 10.0-0 and White has a superior position, Pantioukhine-Rives, Le Grand Bornand 2007.

6...♕xd4

This is almost invariably played, although none other than Alexey Shirov has played the preliminary 6...♘f6 here, after 7.♕e2 (7.e5 ♕xd4; 7.♘f3 ♗xc3; 7.♘ge2!? ♗xc3 8.♘xc3 ♕xd4 9.♕e2 offers compensation, although Black is still solid of course) 7...♕xd4 we reach the diagrammed position.

8.♘f3 (here 8.e5! ♘d5 9.♘f3 ♕b6 10.0-0 planning ♘e4, is indicated as an improvement for White by GM Rustem Dautov) 8...♕d8 (8...♕c5 9.e5 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 ♘d5 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.♘g5 0-0 13.♕e4 g6 14.♕h4 h5 15.♘e4 ♕e7 – 15...♕a5 16.♗b3! – 16.♗g5 f6 17.exf6 ♘5xf6 18.♖ad1, with a winning positional advantage for White in Grant-MacDonald, Hamilton 2004) 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.a3 (White can also leave the bishop on b4, and start by putting his rooks on the open files with 10.♖ac1 or 10.♖fd1) 10...♗e7 11.♖ac1 0-0 12.e5 ♘d5 13.♖fd1 b6, San Segundo-Shirov, Madrid 1996. White has sufficient compensation for the pawn at this stage. Shirov only won after a long and hard game. There are several interesting options for White along the way, so I conclude that Shirov's 6...♘f6 is quite dangerous for Black.

7.♕e2

7...e5

This gives Black some space, enables his light-squared bishop to breathe more freely, and prevents a possible e4-e5. A clear disadvantage of the text, however, is that it weakens the diagonal a2-g8. This is an important crossroads, so it makes sense to study other moves as well:

● 7...b5. This may weaken the queenside, but it has several plusses as well: Black gains some space, he can hide his queen on b6 (after ♘f3), the bishop may be developed to b7

and it gains a tempo. Not bad for one move!
Now worth looking at is **8.♗d3!?**. After 8...♘d7 9.♘f3 ♕b6 10.0-0 ♗xc3 (10...♘c5 also favours White 11.♘xb5 – 11.♗c2; 11.a3 – 11...♘xd3 12.♕xd3 ♕xb5 13.♕xb5 cxb5 14.♗xb4; 10...♘gf6? is bad after 11.♘xb5!) 11.♗xc3 ♘gf6 12.a4 (12.b4!?) 12...b4 13.a5! ♕b8 14.♗d2 e5 15.♖ac1 with distinct pressure, Potkin-Vitiugov, St Petersburg 2005.
White usually plays **8.♗b3**, though. Play often goes 8...♘d7 (8...♘e7 9.♘f3 ♕b6 10.0-0 ♘a6 11.a4!? 0-0 12.axb5 ♗xc3 – 12...cxb5 – 13.♗xc3 cxb5 14.♗d4 ♕b7 15.♖a5 ♘c7 16.♕e3 a6 17.♖c1 f6 and a draw was agreed in Miljkovic-Mastrovasilis, Novi Sad 2002. Although he is a pawn down, White may consider to continue playing with 18.♕c3 ♘e8 19.♗c5 ♖f7 20.e5) 9.♘f3 ♕b6 10.0-0 ♘gf6

In practice White has now tried:
– 11.e5 forcing 11...♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘d5 13.c4! bxc4 14.♗xc4 a5 15.♖ab1 ♕a7 16.♕e4 ♗a6 17.♗xa6 ♕xa6 18.♕g4 ♔f8 19.♖fc1 and the small material deficit notwithstanding, White had a slight edge in Comas Fabrego-Godena, Mondariz 2000.
– 11.♖fe1 ♗xc3 (11...0-0 12.e5±; 11...e5 12.♘xb5 ♗c5 13.♘c3±) 12.♗xc3 b4 13.♗xf6 ♘xf6 14.e5 ♗a6 15.♕c2 ♘d5 16.♕e4 ♖d8 (16...0-0 17.♘g5) 17.♖ac1 h6 18.h4 ♘e7 (18...0-0 19.♗c2 g6 20.h5) 19.♖ed1 0-0. Black can no longer postpone castling, but he still walks into an attack: 20.♗c2 g6 21.h5 ♘f5 22.♕f4 ♗e2 23.♗xf5! (23.♖xd8 ♕xd8 24.♗xf5 ♗xf3 25.gxf3 exf5 26.hxg6 ♕g5+ 27.♕xg5 hxg5 28.♖xc6±) 23...♗xf3 24.hxg6 fxg6 25.♕xh6 ♖xf5 26.♕xg6+ ♔f8 27.gxf3 and White won in Naer-Timofeev, Krasnoyarsk 2003.
● 7...♘d7 8.♘f3 ♕b6 9.0-0 ♘e7 10.♖ad1 ♘g6 11.e5 and White had typical compensation in Jimenez-Bertona, Alicante 2001. After 11...♗e7 12.h4! ♕c7 13.♖fe1 b5 14.♗b3 b4 15.♘e4 ♘gxe5 (15...♘dxe5 16.♘xe5 ♕xe5 17.h5) 16.♗f4 White was two pawns down, but the pin is causing Black some major headaches. Play continued: 16...0-0 17.♘xe5 ♘xe5 18.♘g5! f6 19.♗xe6+ (19.♘xe6!? ♗xe6 20.♗xe6+ ♔h8 21.♖d7 ♕b8 22.♖xe7 ♕d6! 23.♗xe5 fxe5 24.♖b7 ♕xe6 25.♕xe5 ♕xe5 26.♖xe5 is a superior double rook ending, that will be very hard to hold) 19...♔h8 20.♗xe5 (20.♘f7+! ♖xf7 21.♗xf7 should win) 20...fxe5 21.♘f7+ ♔g8! 22.♗xc8 ♖axc8 23.♘xe5 ♗d6 24.♕c4+, with a clear edge.
● 7...♕d8!? 8.♖d1 ♘d7 9.a3 (or simply 9.♘f3) 9...♗f8? (this is really very slow; 9...♗d6 10.f4 e5 11.♘f3 ♕e7 is given as unclear by Dautov) 10.f4 ♘gf6 11.♘f3 ♕c7 12.0-0 ♗c5+ 13.♔h1 0-0 14.♗a2!? (intending ♗b1 and e5, with a powerful attack) 14...b6?! 15.b4! (suddenly White can play on the queenside too!) 15...♗e7 16.♖c1 ♕b7 17.e5 ♘d5 18.♘xd5 cxd5 19.♘d4

and White was nearly winning already in Aleksandrov-Mastrovasilis, Warsaw 2005. The problem is that he can hardly move his pieces – especially ♗c8 and ♖a8 are hard to introduce into the game, while White can play on both wings with confidence. In the game Black quickly lost after 19...♕a6? 20.♕e3 ♗b7 21.♗b1! and the queen was very awkward on a6.

8.♘f3 ♕d6 9.a3 ♗a5

If 9...♗c5 then 10.♘a4 ♗d4 11.♘xd4 exd4 (11...♕xd4 12.0-0-0 and the threat of ♗g5 decides the matter, for if 12...♕d8 then 13.♕h5 ♕c7 14.♗a5 b6 15.♘xb6!) 12.e5 ♕g6 (12...♕d8 13.♕f3 ♗e6 14.♗xe6 fxe6 15.♘c5 ♕d5 16.♕xd5 exd5 17.♘xb7±) 13.e6!? ♗xe6 14.♘c5 with a dangerous initiative after something like 14...♘e7 15.♗xe6 fxe6 16.♘xe6 d3! 17.♕e3 ♘d5 18.♕h3.

Also favourable for White is 9...♗xc3 10.♗xc3 ♘d7 11.0-0.

10.0-0

10...♗c7

To parry the threat of 11.♘b5. For example: 10...♘f6 11.♘b5 cxb5 12.♗xb5+ ♘c6 13.♗xa5±.

11.♘g5

Very direct play, but moving either rook to d1 would also have been very strong.

11...♘h6 12.f4 0-0

No better is 12...♗g4 13.♗xf7+ ♘xf7 14.♕xg4 (14.♘xf7? ♕d4+−+) 14...♘xg5 15.♕xg5 0-0 (15...♕xd2? 16.♕xg7 ♗b6+ 17.♔h1 ♖f8 18.♕xb7+−) 16.♖ad1.

13.f5!

Played against the awkward position of the knight on h6.

13...♘d7 14.♖ad1

White is inviting all his friends to the party! The vis-a-vis along the d-file is unpleasant for her dark majesty.

14...b5 15.♗a2 ♗b6+ 16.♔h1

16...a5?

Black intends ...b4 and ...♗a6, but this is a bit naive. Necessary was 16...♕e7.

17.♘e6 fxe6 18.♗xh6 ♕e7 19.♗xe6+

Material is equal again, but White has a positional edge.

19...♔h8 20.♗xd7

A surprising exchange. White does not take into account the pieces that he is exchanging, but he rightly regards what pieces will remain. 20.♗e3 ♗xe3 21.♗xd7 (21.♕xe3 ♘c5=) 21...♗xd7 22.♕xe3 transposes.

20...♗xd7 21.♗e3 ♗xe3

Or 21...♗c7 22.♗c5 and White gets his rook on the seventh rank after 22...♕xc5 23.♖xd7. On move 22 White can also play 22.♕g4 or 22.♕f2.

22.♕xe3 ♗e8

Passive, but Black is defending against the doubling of rooks on the d-file and the possible invasion of White's queen: 22...♖ad8 23.♕a7, and 22...♖fd8 23.♖d3.

23.♖d3 ♗h5 24.♖f2 ♖fd8 25.♖fd2 h6

26.h3!

An important little move. After the immediate (and seemingly powerful) 26.♕b6 there follows 26...♖xd3 27.♖xd3 b4! and now the tempting 28.♕xc6 is met by 28...♕f8!, when Black suddenly has major counterplay because of White's weak back rank.

26...b4?

This increases White's positional advantage after

27.♘a4! bxa3 28.bxa3 ♖xd3 29.♖xd3 ♖b8 30.♘c5

White's trumps should now suffice to win.

30...♖b2 30...♗e8 was more stubborn.

31.♖d7 ♕h4 32.♘e6 ♖e2

White can win in all sorts of ways now. Potkin chose the very pretty

33.♕g3

and Black resigned!

– He is mated after 33...♕xg3 34.♖d8+ ♔h7 35.♘f8+ ♔g8 36.♘g6+ ♔f7 37.♖f8+.

– White also wins after 33...♕f6 34.♖d8+ ♔h7 35.♘f8+ ♔g8 36.♕b3+ ♗f7 37.♕b8.

– Best was 33...♖e1+! 34.♔h2 ♕xg3+ 35.♔xg3 and now the same mate can only be avoided by playing 35...g5 when 36.♘g7 ♗d1 37.♘e8 (37.f6 ♗b3 38.♘f5) 37...♔g8 38.♔f2 ♖h1 39.♘f6+ ♔f8 40.♖h7 wins.

Instead of 33.♕g3 the more mundane 33.♕c5 ♕e1+ 34.♔h2 ♖xg2+ 35.♔xg2 ♕xe4+ 36.♔g3 ♕f3+ 37.♔h4 would also have won.

CHAPTER 8

Alexander Finkel

Queen's Fianchetto in the Alekhine

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.c4 ♘b6 4.b3

The Alekhine Defence might very well be regarded as some sort of a surprise weapon in itself. So by opting for a move like 4.b3!? White is using reversed psychology – instead of entering theoretical lines with which Black is thoroughly familiar, White forces Black to think for himself right from the very first moves. It is interesting to mention in this respect that the Lithuanian grandmaster Eduardas Rozentalis has rather successfully employed 3.g3 against the Alekhine for quite some time. True, 4.b3 has never been advocated by any of the top players (except for a single try by Ljubojevic some 30 years ago).

The point behind 4.b3 is quite simple and logical: White hopes to exploit a certain delay in the development of Black's kingside pieces, caused by the necessity to defend the pawn on g7, which is immediately attacked by White's dark-squared bishop.

The drawbacks of this move are also quite obvious – should White play d4 later on the bishop could be misplaced on b2, not to mention the fact that White voluntarily gives up on the opportunity to take control over the centre.

After 4.b3 Black has two options: 4...d6 and 4...g6; each leading to quite different types of positions. Also, after 4...d6 5.exd6 Black can re-capture on d6 in three different ways.

By nature the positions arising after 4.b3 are

quite different from any other line of the Alekhine Defence, so it's hard to think of a better way to drag an opponent into unfamiliar territory. In many cases such an approach will pay off as most players tend to react rather poorly when confronted with an opening surprise.

□ **Sergey Kalygin**
■ **Vahagn Hachatrian**
St Petersburg Petroff-mem 2000

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.c4 ♘b6 4.b3!? d6

The most natural and popular reply. For 4...g6 see below the game Dutschak-Konopka, Deizisau 1997.

5.exd6 exd6

Black's most popular choice, even though I am not sure if it is any better than 5...♕xd6 or 5...cxd6 (see the next game).

6.♗b2

The bishop exerts strong pressure along the diagonal, and Black must now make up his mind how to continue his development.

6...♘c6

● 6...♘8d7?! 7.♕e2+! ♕e7 8.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 9.♘c3 ♘f6 10.♗c2 ♗f5 11.♘f3 c6 12.0-0 was a little awkward for Black in Gusev-Fedin, Soviet Union 1967.

● 6...d5 7.♘f3 and now:

– 7...c5!? 8.♗e2 d4 9.d3 ♘c6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♘bd2 0-0 12.♖e1 ♗f5 13.a3 ♖e8 ½-½, Knezevic-Rajkovic, Majdanpek 1976.

– 7...♘c6 8.♗e2 ♗e6 9.d3 ♗c7 10.♘bd2 0-0 White has his diagonal but Black's pieces are on healthy positions. Play is about equal, Theocharides-Dyachkov, Siofok EUch jr 1996.

7.♘f3 ♗g4

Preparing kingside castling would be rather problematic under the circumstances, so Black is planning to evacuate his king to the queenside.

Another possibility was 7...♗f5 8.♗e2 (this allows Black to develop his kingside, perhaps 8.♘a3?) 8...♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.d4 ♗f6 11.♕d2 d5 12.♘a3 ♖e8 13.♖fe1 ♗e4 14.♖ad1 ♕d7 with decent play for Black, Carvalho-Regan, Saint Vincent zonal 1999.

8.♗e2 d5 9.0-0 dxc4!?

This is obviously not forced. After 9...♕d7 10.♘a3 0-0-0 11.d3 dxc4 12.♘xc4 f6 and Black is fine.

10.bxc4 ♕d7 11.♘d4?!

11...♗xe2?!

Black may consider 11...♘xd4! 12.♗xg4 f5 13.♖e1+ ♔f7 14.♗e2 ♗c5.

12.♕xe2+ ♕e7 13.♕g4! Keeping Black's king in the centre. **13...♘xd4**

Dubious is 13...♘e5?! 14.♕g3 ♘bxc4?

(14...♘exc4? 15.♘f5!) 15.♗c3 0-0-0 16.d3 ♘d6 17.♖e1 ♖e8 18.f4 and wins.

14.♕xd4 ♖d8 15.♕f4

Not 15.♕g4?! ♕e6∓. After the text Black is in trouble.

15...♔d7

The king is trying to find shelter on the queenside. Worse are 15...♕e2? 16.♘a3 ♕xd2 17.♖fe1+ ♗e7 18.♕c5!?±, and 15...f6?! 16.♘a3 ♕d6 17.♕c3+ ♗e7 18.d4±.

16.c5! ♘d5

If Black takes the pawn with 16...♕xc5 then 17.♖c1 ♖e8! (17...♕d6 18.♗e5±) 18.♘a3 ♕d6 19.♕xf7+ ♖e7 20.♕f5+ gives White a dangerous attack.

17.♕a4+ ♔c8 18.♖c1?!

White should have simply taken the pawn, thus 18.♕xa7 c6 (18...♕xc5 19.♕a8+ ♔d7 20.♕xb7 ♗d6 21.♕b3±) 19.♕a8+ ♔c7 20.♕a5+ ♔c8 (20...♔b8 21.♗e5+! ♘c7 22.♗d6! ♕d7 23.♗f4±) 21.d4 would have led to a position with superior chances for White. Now things are less clear.

18...♔b8 19.♘c3 ♘xc3 20.♗xc3 ♕d7 21.♕a5 ♕c6 22.♖ab1

22...♗e7?

After this move White develops a strong initiative, and Black proves to be helpless against it. It was necessary to play the sharp 22...♕xc5!? 23.♕xc5 ♗xc5 24.♗xg7 ♖hg8 25.♗f6 ♖d6 26.♗e7 ♗xf2+! 27.♔xf2 ♖xd2+ 28.♔f3 ♖gxg2 with an unclear position.

23.d4 ♗f6 24.♖b4

White's play over the b-file is just unstoppable.

24...♖d5

Black loses after 24...♔a8?! 25.♖cb1 ♖b8 26.d5! ♕a6 (26...♕xd5? 27.♕xa7+! ♔xa7 28.♖a4 mate) 27.♕xa6 bxa6 28.♖xb8+ ♖xb8 29.♖xb8+ ♔xb8 30.♗xf6 gxf6 31.f4.

25.♖cb1 b6 26.♕a6 ♗d8 27.a4 h5 28.♗d2!

Taking h6 under control. Alternatively, White is also better after 28.a5 ♖h6 29.♖a1 (less clear is 29.axb6 cxb6 30.♖a1 ♖d7 31.cxb6 ♗xb6 32.♖c4 ♕b7) 29...♖d7 30.♗d2.

28...g5 29.a5 ♖h6

White plays and wins with the surprising

30.h4! ♖g6 31.axb6 cxb6 32.cxb6 ♗xb6 33.hxg5 ♕b7

Or 33...♕d6 34.♖xb6+ axb6 35.♖a1! (35.♖xb6+ ♕xb6 36.♗f4+ ♕d6±) 35...♕c6 36.♗f4+ and wins.

34.♗f4+ ♔a8 35.♖xb6!

A nice blow ending Black's suffering.

□ **Yudiana Hernandez**
■ **Sergio Estremera**
Mondariz 1997

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.c4 ♘b6 4.b3 d6 5.exd6 ♕xd6!?

This move is almost never an option in other lines of the Alekhine Defence, but after 4.b3 it makes perfect sense.

Another possible reply is 5...cxd6, with the idea to neutralize White's pressure on g7 by closing the long diagonal with ...e5: 6.♗b2 ♘c6 7.♘f3 ♗f5 8.♗e2 e5

9.d4 e4 10.♘fd2 ♕g5 11.g4!? ♗g6 and now rather than 12.♘f1 ♕h4 13.♘c3 0-0-0 14.♘g3 ♖e8 with unclear play, Rigo-Farago, Budapest 2000, White obtains a pleasant edge with 12.h4 ♕f4 13.h5 e3 14.fxe3 ♕g3+ 15.♔f1 ♗xb1 16.♕xb1 ♕xe3 17.♕d3.

6.d4

Otherwise Black may just play 6...e5, for example 6.♗b2 e5 7.♘f3 ♘c6 8.♘c3 ♗g4 9.♗e2 0-0-0.

6...c5!?

If Black is not looking for simplifications he may opt for 6...♘c6!?, leading to much more complicated positions: 7.♗b2 ♗f5 8.♗e2 ♕g6 9.♘f3 and now White has excellent play for the pawn after 9...♕xg2 10.♖g1 ♕h3 11.d5 ♘b4 12.♘a3. Stronger is 9...e6 10.♘h4 ♕f6 11.♘xf5 exf5 12.♗f3 0-0-0 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.0-0 ♗c5 and both sides have their chances, Berg-Hansen, Copenhagen 1984.

7.♗b2

White cannot avoid the exchange of queens:

– 7.♘f3 cxd4 8.♘xd4 (8.♕xd4 e6 9.♗b2 ♕xd4 10.♘xd4 ♗b4+=) 8...e5 9.♘b5 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 unclear.

– 7.♗e3 cxd4 8.♕xd4 ♕xd4 9.♗xd4 transposes to the game.

7...cxd4 8.♕xd4 ♕xd4 9.♗xd4 ♘c6 10.♗c3 e5 11.♘f3 f6

Chances are even in this queenless middlegame. White has a queenside majority but Black has a central pawn and can't be worse. Also equal was 11...♗b4 12.♗xb4 ♘xb4 13.♘a3 f6 14.♗e2 ♗g4 15.0-0 0-0-0, Tovillas-Bulcourf, Buenos Aires 1991.

12.♗e2?!

A mistake that passes the initiative into Black's hands. The most radical way to deal with 12...♘b4 is 12.a3.

12...♘b4! 13.♘a3 ♘4d5!? 14.♗b2?!

White loses the thread of the game. He had to play 14.cxd5 ♗xa3 15.♖d1 e4 16.♘d2 (16.♗b5+?! ♔f7 17.♘g1 ♖d8∓) 16...♘xd5

17.♘xe4 ♘xc3 18.♘xc3 ♗b4 19.♖c1 ♗e6 20.0-0, even though there is no arguing that Black keeps a minimal advantage.

14...♗b4+ 15.♔f1 ♘f4

This is better for Black, but White doesn't have to lose the position in 10 moves as he did in the game after.

16.♘b5?!

Correct was 16.♘c2 ♗e7 17.♘e3 0-0 (17...♘xe2 18.♔xe2 ♗e6 19.♖hd1=) 18.h4 ♖d8 19.g3 ♘xe2 20.♔xe2 ♗e6 when Black is only a little better.

The remainder of the game is not interesting for our purposes.

□ **Hauke Dutschak**
■ **Michal Konopka**
Deizisau 1997

1.e4 ♘f6 2.e5 ♘d5 3.c4 ♘b6 4.b3 g6

5.♕f3!?

Posing the first threat in the game (winning the knight with 6.c5)!

A more popular move is 5.♗b2 (although I prefer 5.♕f3), for example: 5...♗g7 6.d4 d6 7.f4 0-0 8.♘f3 dxe5 9.fxe5 c5 10.d5 ♗g4 11.♘bd2 e6 and Black has counterplay, Diaz-Marinkovic, Vrnjacka Banja 1988.

In Pyhälä-Mäki, Tampere 1992, White transposed into a kind of Hunt Variation (arguing that the inclusion of 4.b3 g6 favours him). Play was very unclear after 5.c5 ♘d5 6.♗c4 c6 7.♘c3 ♘xc3 8.dxc3 ♗g7 9.♕f3 0-0 10.h4 d5.

5...c5

This is a very unusual position, but it is even more unusual that the game deviates from the theoretical track as early as on move 6!

5...d6 6.exd6 cxd6 7.♗b2 e5 8.c5!? ♘6d7 (8...dxc5 9.♗xe5 ♕e7 10.♕f6 ♕xf6 11.♗xf6 ♖g8 12.♘f3 ♘c6∞) 9.♗c4 ♕f6 10.cxd6 ♕xf3 11.♘xf3 ♗xd6 12.♘c3±, Akotchik-Zuiderweg, Groningen 2004.

6.♗b2

The normal move. Too aggressive is 6.d4? cxd4 – intending 7.c5 ♕c7.

White was a little better after 6.a4?! a5 7.d4 cxd4 8.♘e2 (8.c5? ♕c7∓) 8...♘c6 (8...d6!?) 9.c5 ♗g7?! (9...♘b4 10.cxb6 ♘c2+ 11.♔d1 ♘xa1 12.♗b2 ♗g7 13.♘d2 ♗xe5∞) 10.cxb6 ♕xb6 11.♘f4, Reprintsev-Hudecek, Pardubice 1998.

6...♘c6

Deserving of attention is 6...♗g7 7.d4 d6 8.dxc5 dxc5 9.e6!? 0-0 10.♗xg7 ♔xg7 11.exf7 ♖xf7 12.♕c3+ ♖f6 13.♘f3 ♘c6.

7.d4 e6?

More in the spirit of the position was the piece sacrifice 7...cxd4!? 8.c5 ♘xe5 9.♕d1 ♘c6 10.cxb6 ♕xb6 11.♗d3 e5 12.♘f3 ♗b4+ 13.♘fd2 d5 and Black has three pawns for the piece.

8.dxc5 ♗xc5 9.♘d2 0-0 10.0-0-0!?

Since White is threatening 11.♘e4 Black's next moves are forced.

10...d5 11.exd6 f5 12.♘e2

Bringing in your pieces is essential, viz. 12.h4?! ♕xd6 13.h5 g5 14.h6 g4 15.♕e2 ♖d8∓.

12...♕xd6 13.♕c3

I guess the dark-squared bishop couldn't have hoped for more!

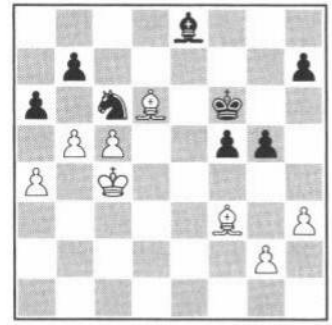
13...e5 14.♘f3!

Correctly assessing the arising endgame as better for White.

Things are less clear after 14.♘e4 ♕xd1+! (14...♕e7 15.♘xc5 ♕xc5 16.f4±) 15.♔xd1 fxe4.

14...♕e7 15.♘xe5 ♕xe5 16.♕xe5 ♘xe5 17.♗xe5 ♗xf2 18.♗d6 ♖e8 19.c5 ♘d7 20.♘d4

The end of a forced sequence of moves initiated by 14.♘f3. **20...♘b8** Or 20...♘e5 21.♘b5 winning. **21.♗c4+ ♔g7 22.♖hf1** 22.♘b5 ♘a6. **22...♗xd4 23.♖xd4 ♘c6 24.♖d2 ♗e6 25.♗b5** The rest of the game is a classic example of the superiority of the bishop pair. **25...a6** 25...♖ac8. **26.♗e2 ♖ac8 27.♔b2 ♔f6 28.♗f3 ♘d8?!** Better is 28...g5. **29.b4 ♘c6 30.a3 ♖cd8 31.♖fd1 ♖d7 32.♔c3 g5 33.h3 ♖g7 34.♖e1 ♗d7 35.♖xe8 ♗xe8 36.♖e2 ♖g8 37.a4 ♗d7 38.♔c4!?** Also strong is 38.b5 axb5 39.axb5 ♘a7 40.♗e7+ ♔g6 41.♗xb7 ♘xb5+ 42.♔c4±. **38...♖e8?** Correct was the prophylactic 38...♖a8!. **39.♖xe8 ♗xe8 40.b5** Now White just wins.



40...axb5+ 41.axb5 ♘a7 42.c6 ♘xb5 A desperate attempt to simplify. 42...bxc6 loses after 43.b6. While the same holds for 42...♘c8 43.♗c7 b6 44.♗d8+ ♔g6 45.♔d5 ♗f7+ 46.♔e5 ♗c4 47.g4!. **43.♔xb5 f4 44.♔c5 ♗xc6 45.♗xc6 bxc6 46.♔xc6 ♔e6 47.♗c7 h5 48.♔c5 ♔f5 49.♔d4 g4 50.♔d3 ♔g5 51.♗d8+ ♔f5 52.♔d4 g3** 52...f3 53.gxf3 gxh3 54.♗c7+−. **53.♔d3 f3 54.gxf3 g2 55.♗b6 ♔f4 56.♔e2 ♔g3 57.f4 ♔xf4 58.♗c7+ ♔g5 59.♔f2** Black resigned.

CHAPTER 9

Igor Lysyj

Grünfeld Indian: Kruppa Variation

How about 7.♗g5!?

This variation of the Grünfeld has come into use thanks to the efforts of the Ukrainian grandmaster Yury Kruppa. In this line White has a strategically clear plan and quite good statistics. To my mind it is surprising therefore that 7.♗g5!? is not employed more often. As one of the supporters of this fairly new variation, I think that it deserves a better fate. In this article I will demonstrate improvements for White in a whole series of problematic lines (as compared to the work of Tibor Fogarasi in Yearbook 85).

White's idea is to tie Black temporarily to the defence of the e7-pawn and succeed in advancing his pawn to d5. We will consider Black's possible ways to gain counterplay.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗g5 c5 8.♖c1

Black can now either continue his develop-

ment with 8...0-0 (Variation II) or immediately attack with the characteristic 8...♕a5 (Variation I). Lesser alternatives are:

● 8...cxd4 this immediate attack on White's centre does not solve Black's problems 9.cxd4 ♘c6 (the problem is that the greedy 9...♗xd4 leads to a difficult position after 10.♖xc8 ♗xf2+ 11.♔xf2 ♕xc8 12.♘f3) 10.d5 ♘d4 11.♕d2 ♗d7 12.♗d3 (note that the immediate 12.d6 is too optimistic: 12...♖c8 13.♗c4 ♖c6 14.dxe7 ♕c7 15.♗d5 ♖xc1+ 16.♕xc1 ♕xc1+ 17.♗xc1 ♔xe7∓) 12...0-0 13.♘e2 ♘xe2 14.♗xe2, Plischki-Kalod, Ceska Trebova 2006. White's potential passed d-pawn promises him an enduring advantage.

● Interpolating 8...h6 9.♗e3 leads to an inferior endgame after 9...♕a5 10.♕d2 cxd4 (White is slightly better after 10...♘d7 11.♗d3 b6 12.♘e2 e5 13.d5±, Pantovic-Juric, Bar 2005) 11.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 12.♔xd2 (it is not clear where an improvement can be found for White in the following game: 12.♗xd2 0-0 13.♘f3 e6 14.♗b5 ♗d7 15.♗xd7 ♘xd7 16.♖c7 ♘f6 17.e5 ♘d5 18.♖xb7 ♖fb8 19.♖xb8+ ♖xb8 with good compensation for the pawn in Kruppa-Lupulescu, Bucharest 2006).

12...0-0 13.♗d3 ♖d8 14.♘e2 ♘c6 15.♖c4 ♗e6 (15...e6 16.♖b1±) 16.d5 (in the endgame the potential passed d-pawn acquires even greater strength) 16...♘e5 17.♖c7 ♗d7 18.♖b1 b6 19.♗a6 e6

White did not gain any advantage after 20.♔e1 ♗c8 21.♗xc8 ♖dxc8 22.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 in Milov-Howell, Ottawa 2007.

It is not obvious to me how White, after the recommendation of 20.♗d4 in Yearbook 85, can gain an advantage. For example: 20...♗c8 21.♗xc8 ♖axc8 22.♖xc8 ♖xc8.

I therefore propose the novelty 20.f4!? which makes the whole line unattractive for Black. An admittedly rather long sample line runs: 20...♘g4 21.♗b7 ♖ab8 22.♗d4 exd5 23.♗xd5 ♗xd4 24.♘xd4 ♗e6 25.♘c6 ♗xd5 26.♘xd8 ♗xa2 27.♘c6 ♗xb1 28.♘xb8 ♗xe4 29.g3 ♘xh2 30.♔e3 ♗h1 31.♖xa7 and White has excellent chances of tormenting Black in the resulting ending.

Variation I

8...♕a5 9.♕d2

Black is again at a cross-roads:

● In the event of **9...cxd4?! 10.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 11.♔xd2** he faces a depressing struggle for a draw: **11...♘c6 12.d5 ♘d4** (or 12...♘e5 13.♖c7 ♘d7 – 13...f6 14.♗f4 ♔d8 15.♖c2± – 14.♘f3 with the initiative for White) **13.♖c7 f6 14.♗e3 f5 15.e5!** (15.f3 fxe4 16.fxe4 a6 17.♗g5 0-0 led to unclear play in the game Kruppa-Smolen, Cappelle la Grande 2005) **15...♗xe5 16.♖c4 ♘b5 17.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 18.♗xb5+ ♔f7 19.♘f3** and White has an advantage sufficient for a win.

● **9...e6** will not do: **10.♘f3 h6 11.♗f4 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 13.♔xd2 0-0 14.♗b5!±** (weaker is 14.♖c7 ♘c6 15.♔e3 ♖d8 16.♘e5 g5 17.♗g3 f5 as in Stocek-Ftacnik, Philadelphia 2008).

White prevents the knight from going to c6 and gains a significant advantage.

A

More chances of equalizing are promised by **9...0-0 10.♘f3**

Bad is 10.♗xe7? ♖e8 11.♗xc5 ♖xe4+ 12.♗e2 ♘a6 with excellent compensation. And now the lines fork again:

A1

In the event of **10...♗g4** White carries out his main strategic idea with

11.d5 ♘d7 12.c4

12.♗e2!? e6 13.♗e7 ♖fe8 14.d6 was slightly better for White in Kopylov-Turov, Salekhard 2006. Also sufficient for a small edge was 13.c4.

12...♕c7

12...♕a3 leads to an edge for White after 13.♗e2 ♘f6 14.♕c2 e6 15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 exd5 17.cxd5 ♘d7 18.0-0 ♗d4 19.♖b1.

13.♗e2 ♗xf3 Or 13...♘f6 14.♕c2±.

14.♗xf3 ♖fe8 15.0-0 But not 15.♗xe7? ♖xe7 16.d6 ♗h6 with equal chances.

and White has a pleasant edge.

A2

As is usually the case in this variation, going into an endgame condemns Black to an unpromising defence:

10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 12.♔xd2 e6

12...♘c6 is met by 13.d5 h6 14.♗h4 g5 15.♗g3±. Worse for Black is 14...♖d8 15.♔e3 g5 16.dxc6 gxh4 17.c7 ♖d6 18.e5 ♖b6 19.♗c4.

13.♗b5

Weaker is 13.♖c7 ♘c6 14.d5 exd5 15.cxd5 ♘b4 16.♗c4 b5 17.♗b3 a5! unclear.

13...♘c6

After 13...a6 14.♗e2 Black obtains equal chances with 14...♘c6 15.d5 exd5 16.exd5 f6. Stronger therefore is 14.♗a4 b5 15.♗b3 a5 16.♖c5!.

After the text White has several ways of gaining a tangible advantage:

– 14.d5 wins an exchange for a pawn after 14...exd5 15.exd5 f6 16.♗f4 ♖d8 17.♔e2 ♖xd5 (17...♘b4 18.♖hd1±) 18.♗c4.

– 14.♗xc6 is also promising: 14...bxc6 15.e5±. However, note that 15.♔e3 is not so convincing after: 15...f6 16.♗f4 e5 17.dxe5 fxe5 18.♘xe5 ♖xf4 19.♔xf4 g5+ 20.♔xg5 ♗xe5, Volokitin-Moor, Mainz 2007.

– 14.♖hd1 f6 (14...h6 15.♗e3 f5 16.exf5 gxf5 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♗f4±; 14...♘xd4 15.♘xd4 ♗xd4 16.♗e7±) 15.♗e3 f5 16.exf5 gxf5 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♗f4 and only two results are possible.

A3

10...e6 11.♗h6 ♘c6 12.h4!

Weaker is 12.♗xg7 ♔xg7 13.h4 h5 14.♗c4 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖d8 16.♕xa5 ♘xa5 17.♔e2 ♗d7 18.♔e3 ♖ac8 19.♗e2 ♗a4 with near equality in Lysyj-Rakhmanov 2008.

12...cxd4

It is extremely dangerous to play 12...♖d8 13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 14.h5 cxd4 15.hxg6 hxg6 16.♕h6+ ♔f6 17.♕h4+ g5 18.♕h6+ ♔e7 19.♕xg5+ ♕xg5 20.♘xg5.

13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 14.cxd4 ♖d8 15.♕xa5 ♘xa5 16.♔d2 h5 17.♔e3 ♗d7 18.♗d3

With an extra tempo compared with the endgame from the Lysyj-Rakhmanov game (see the note to move 12).

So we see that 9...0-0 is a fairly safe choice, but even so it does not promise complete equality. We will now examine a more aggressive idea, aimed at immediate counterplay against White's centre.

B

9...♕a4!?

A highly original queen manoeuvre.

10.♘f3 ♘c6 11.d5!

The author of 9...♕a4!? easily demonstrated its viability after 11.♗e2 in the game Obodchuk-Dvoiris, Salekhard 2006: 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 ♕xd4 14.♗b5+ ♗d7 15.♕xd4 ♗xd4 16.♗xd7+ Kxd7 17.♖d1 e5 18.♗f6 and the massive exchanges led to a draw.

11.♗e3, recommended in Yearbook 85, does not promise White any advantage because of 11...♘a5! 12.♕c2 ♕xc2 13.♖xc2 ♗d7.

11...♘e5 12.♗e2 ♕xe4 13.0-0 0-0
Not 13...♗g4 14.♖fe1 and wins.
14.♖fe1

Despite his extra pawn, Black faces serious problems. White retains the initiative thanks to his lead in development and potential passed d-pawn.
14...♗f6
White is better after 14...c6?! 15.♘xe5 ♕xc5 16.♗f3. Even worse is 14...f6? 15.♘xe5 ♕xe5 16.♗f4 ♕f5 17.♗c4.
15.♖cd1! ♖d8
15...♘c4 is unsatisfactory after 16.♕c1 ♘d6 17.♗d3 ♕g4 (17...♕a4) 18.♖xe7 ♗xe7 19.♗xe7 ♕d7 20.♗xf8 ♔xf8 21.♖e1.
15...♗d7 loses immediately to 16.d6.
Or 15...♕f5 16.♗xf6 ♕xf6 17.♕e3 and White keeps his initiative.
16.♗xf6 exf6 17.♘xe5 fxe5 Or 17...♕xc5 18.d6±. **18.♕g5**

White will regain the e5-pawn, and he will retain a long-term initiative thanks to his passed d-pawn.
It should be mentioned that 18...♖xd5?? loses to 19.♗f1.

Variation II

8...0-0 9.♘f3
In the Premier League of the Russian Club Championship of 2008 I tried the interesting 9.d5!? against Emil Sutovsky, an acknowledged expert on the Grünfeld, but I think that the text move is nevertheless more promising.
It is important to realize that 9...♘c6 is not critical after 10.d5 ♘e5 11.♘xe5 ♗xe5 12.♕d2 with a pleasant edge. This is why Black should develop his bishop to g4, either immediately, or after the preliminary exchange on d4. We will start with the capture on d4.

A

9...cxd4 10.cxd4 ♗g4 11.d5

This position has often occurred in practice:
11...♕d6
● 11...h6 was played in one of my games: 12.♗e3 (12.♗f4 ♘a6 13.♕d2 ♖c8) 12...e6 (Black's problems are not solved by 12...♘d7 13.h3!? ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♖c8 15.♖xc8 ♕xc8 16.♗e2 ♘e5 17.♕b3 g5

18.h4 g4 19.♖g1±. The ending after 12...♕a5+ 13.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 14.♘xd2 ♖c8 15.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 16.♗c4 is preferable for White) 13.♗c4 exd5 14.♗xd5 ♘c6 15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♕xf3 ♘b4 17.0-0 ♘xd5 18.exd5 ♕d7 19.d6! and the passed pawn brought White victory in the game Lysyj-Braun, Hengelo 2007.

● In the only elite game played with this variation there followed 11...♘d7 12.♗e2 ♘f6 (in this version the sharp 12...f5?! is dubious in view of 13.d6 ♕a5+ 14.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 15.♘xd2 ♗xe2 16.dxe7 ♖fe8 17.♔xe2 ♗f6 18.♗xf6 ♘xf6 19.♖c7 fxe4 20.♖xb7±) 13.h3 ♗d7 14.♗d3 h6 15.♗f4 e6 16.♗c7 ♕e8 17.d6 ♗c6 18.♕e2 ♘h5 and after 19.♕e3 White would have gained a great advantage. While 19.g3 e5 20.0-0 was only slightly better in Ponomariov-Svidler, Moscow 2006.

● 11...♗xf3 deserves consideration: 12.gxf3 ♘d7 13.♗h3 f5 14.exf5 gxf5 15.0-0 ♘b6!? (weaker is 15...♘e5 16.♖e1±, Shishkin-Lupulescu, Bucharest 2006), but after 16.♖e1 ♖f7 17.♕b3 ♕xd5 18.♖xe7 Black faces a difficult struggle for a draw.

12.♗e2

and now:

A1

12...h6 13.♗e3 ♘d7

Or 13...♕b4+ 14.♘d2 ♗xe2 15.♕xc2 ♘d7 16.0-0±. Farago-Rosino, Hockenheim 2007.

14.0-0 f5

If 14...♖ac8 then 15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 f5 17.exf5 gxf5 18.♕b3 and White is much better.

15.exf5 gxf5

The alternative captures are no better: 15...♗xf5 16.♘h4 and 15...♖xf5 16.h3 ♗xf3 17.♗xf3 ♘f6 18.♕b3.

16.h3 ♗h5 17.♕d2 f4 18.♗d4 ♗xf3 19.♗xf3 ♗xd4 20.♕xd4 ♘e5 21.♗e4

The excessively open position of the black king is felt.

A2

12...e6 13.0-0 exd5 14.♕xd5 ♕xd5 15.exd5

Now White once again demonstrates the strength of his passed d-pawn:

15...♖e8 16.♗b5 ♗d7 17.♗xd7 ♘xd7 18.♖c7 Komarov-Swinkels, Eupen 2006. White's play is pretty straightforward.

A3

12...♘d7 Here too Black faces problems:

13.0-0 f5 14.♕b3 ♘b6

White wins after 14...fxe4 15.♗xe7 ♕f4 16.d6+ ♔h8 17.g3 ♕h6 18.♘g5 ♗xe2 19.♗xf8. Or in this line 15...♕xe7 16.d6+ ♕f7 17.♗c4 exf3 18.♖fe1.

15.h3 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 fxe4 17.♗xe4

♕e5 18.d6+ ♖f7 19.♗xb7 ♖b8 20.d7 ♘xd7 21.♗e3

Again White has a clear edge.

All in all, it can be concluded that after 9...cxd4 10.cxd4 ♗g4 11.d5, despite the great variety of possibilities, everywhere Black faces a difficult defence.

B

9...♗g4 10.d5 f5!?

In the event of 10...♘d7 11.♗e2 ♕a5 the following sample variation is possible: 12.0-0 (12.♕c2 is not bad, retaining all the strategic pluses of the position) 12...♗xc3 (12...e6 13.h3±) 13.♗xe7 ♖fe8 14.d6 ♗f6 15.♗xf6 ♘xf6 16.♗c4 ♖xe4 17.♕b3 and White keeps his edge after both

– 17...♗xf3 18.gxf3 ♖d4 19.♗xf7+ ♔h8 20.♕xb7 ♖d8 21.♕c7, and

– 17...♕b4 18.♗xf7+ ♔g7 19.♘g5 ♖d4 20.♕xb4 ♖xb4 21.f3 ♗d7 22.♗e6.

The text is the most critical continuation, first employed by Emil Sutovsky in a game against yours truly.

11.♕b3 ♔h8

White is preferable after 11...♗f6 12.♗h6 fxe4 13.♘g5.

12.♘d2!

On first encountering the idea 10...f5!?, I played extremely badly and lost after 12.♕xb7?!, Lysyj-Sutovsky, Moscow 2007.

12...fxe4

After 12...f4 13.♕xb7 ♘d7 14.f3 h6 15.♗h4 White is just better.

White also gains the better game after 12...♘d7 13.f3 and now:

– 13...h6? 14.fxg4 hxg5 15.h4 gxh4 16.♖xh4+ ♔g8 17.d6+ e6 18.♕xe6+ ♖f7 19.♖h1.

– 13...♗h5 14.♗e2 (14.♕xb7!?±) 14...h6 15.♗e3 ♘f6 (15...f4 16.♗f2) 16.h3! fxe4 17.g4 ♘xd5 18.c4 ♘xe3 19.♕xe3 exf3 20.♗xf3 ♕d6 21.gxh5 gxh5 22.♔d1.

13.h3!

An important improvement compared to a recommendation in Yearbook 85. White forces the black bishop to determine its position.

13...♗c8

After 13...♗f5 White does not hurry to regain the pawn: 14.♗e2 h6 15.♗e3 and in view of the threat of g2-g4 he retains the advantage.

14.♘xe4 ♕c7 15.♗e3 ♘d7

Or 15...♕e5 16.♘g5 with a slight edge.

After the text Black's light-squared bishop is out of play and White can calmly complete his development.

16.♗e2 ♕e5 17.♘g5 ♘f6 18.c4 ♘e4 19.♘xe4 ♕xe4 20.0-0

White's superior pawn structure guarantees him an enduring advantage.

CHAPTER 10

Igor Khenkin

SOS in a Flexible Caro-Kann

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘e4

In the 1990s I experienced some problems as Black versus this flexible set-up in the main line beginning with 3...♗g4. I then thought of 3...♘f6 and started analysing this line with GM Rustem Dautov. Together we found many interesting ideas.

The history of this variation begins with the old game Tarrasch-Réti, Vienna 1922. When Tarrasch met this new idea at the board, he probably decided not to enter some theoretical dispute unprepared and he simply took on d5. After 4...cxd5 5.d4 ♗g4 6.h3 ♗xf3 7.♕xf3 e6 8.♗d3 ♘c6 the game was even. Right after this game he must have realized that White can only pretend to get an opening advantage with 4.e5, and this is what Tarrasch played against the same opponent in Karlsbad 1923. However, after 4...♘e4 he reacted with 5.d3 ♘xc3 6.bxc3, when Black could have easily equalized with 6...♗g4.

Nowadays 4.e5 is still the main line, but after 4...♘e4 White usually plays 5.♘e2, trying to attack Black's knight with d3. Note that 5...♗g4 is now effectively met by 6.♘fg1!

When I was playing this line at the end of the 1990's, I was mostly analysing 5...♗f5, and after 6.♘ed4 e6 7.d3 ♘c5 I was perfectly happy when White exchanged on f5, because my knight was blocking the whole position from square e6. Unfortunately, I lost very painfully against Mischustov in 1999, when he came up with the novelty (after 6.d3

♘c5) 7.h3!, and after 7...e6 8.g4 ♗g6 9.♘f4 ♗e7 10.h4! I was already in big trouble and lost in the end.

I was very disappointed and decided not to play this line anymore. I now believe that this (emotional) decision was made too quickly. The line is still alive after 5...♕b6! which forces 6.d4 (thus giving the knight a much more comfortable place on e4). Black should probably continue with 6...e6 as 6...c5 is decidedly dubious after 7.dxc5 (as most famously played by Fischer against Olafsson in Bled 1959, but there is an earlier and much nicer game by Nezhmetdinov).

□ **Michael Mischustov**
■ **Igor Khenkin**
Germany Bundesliga II 1998/99

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e5

After 4.exd5 cxd5 5.d4

the stem game Tarrasch-Réti, Vienna 1922, went 5...♗g4 6.h3 (Black was already better after 6.♗e2 ♘c6 7.0-0 e6 8.♗f4 ♗e7 9.♘e5 ♗xe2 10.♘xe2 0-0 11.c3 ♘xe5 12.♗xe5 b5, Haznedaroglu-Rausis, Haarlem 2000) 6...♗xf3 7.♕xf3 e6 8.♗d3 ♘c6 9.♗e3 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.a3 a6 12.♘e2 b5 13.♗f4 ♕b6 14.c3 ♘a5 15.♖ad1 ♘c4 16.♗c1 ♕c6 17.♘g3 a5 with equal chances, although Tarrasch later won.

Black can also play 5...♘c6!? 6.♗f4 (6.♗b5 ♗g4 7.h3 ♗xf3 8.♕xf3 e6 is equal) 6...♗g4 7.♗e2 e6 8.0-0 ♗xf3, when after 9.♗xf3 ♗d6 10.♗e3 0-0 play is again even. Criminal is 9.gxf3?, as in Testa-Tocchioni, ICC 2007.

The meek 4.d3 can of course be met by 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♘xe4 6.dxe4 ♕xd1+ 7.♔xd1 ♗g4, as in Pagalos-Kranas, Greece ch U12 2003.

However, more interesting is 4...e5!?, with the following possibilities:

– 5.♘xe5?! d4! 6.♘e2 ♕a5+−+.

– 5.exd5 cxd5 6.♕e2 ♗d6 7.♗g5 ♗e6 8.0-0-0 ♘c6∓.

– 5.g3 dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♘xe4 7.dxe4 ♕xd1+ 8.♔xd1 f6∓.

Clearly, 4.e5 is the only critical move. After 4...♘fd7 White has an excellent French of course (what is that pawn doing on c6?), quite apart from the fact that Boleslavsky's 5.e6!? may well be very strong.

However, if you are in the retreat mode (please read Reinderman's article elsewhere in this book) then you might consider Klaus Berg's 4...♘g8 5.d4 ♗g4.

I will limit myself to 4...♘e4.

4...♘e4 5.♘e2

The afore-mentioned game Tarrasch-Réti, Karlsbad 1923, continued 5.d3 ♘xc3 6.bxc3

Réti now played 6...e6, and after 7.d4 (7.g3!?) 7...b6 8.♗e2 (stronger was 8.♗d3!

♗a6 9.0-0±) 8...♗a6 9.0-0 ♕c8 10.♘g5 h6 11.♗xa6 ♘xa6 12.♕h5 g6 13.♕h3 c5 the game ended in a draw on move 43.

From the diagrammed position Black has the strong 6...♗g4! 7.h3 ♗xf3 8.♕xf3 e6 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.♕g3 g6 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.♖e1 ♕a5 13.d4 h5 with comfortable play, as in Pogrebyssky-Kholmov, Tbilisi 1949.

5.♘e2 is the acid test of Black's idea. For White's alternatives at this stage see the next game.

5...♗f5 6.d3 ♘c5

7.h3!

I rather like 7.♘ed4 e6 8.♘xf5 exf5 for Black, when after 9.♗e2 (or 9.g3 ♘e6 10.♗g2 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0, Eck-Dautov, Bad Wörishofen 1998) 9...♗c7 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.d4 ♘e6 play is unclear.

7...e6 8.g4 ♗g6 9.♘f4 ♗e7 10.h4

Black has big problems now and must play the ugly

10...h6 11.♘xg6 fxg6 12.g5! h5

Or 12...hxg5 13.♘xg5 ♗xg5 14.♗xg5 ♕b6 15.♖b1 ♘bd7 16.b4! ♘a4 17.♕g4 and White's chances are clearly preferable.

13.♘d4 ♘ba6 14.♗h3 ♘c7 15.♗e3

White has a nice positional edge.

15...a5 16.0-0 0-0 17.c3 a4 18.♘e2 ♘d7 19.d4 ♖e8 20.♕d3 ♘f8 21.♘f4 ♔f7

Black is suffering and lost on move 37.

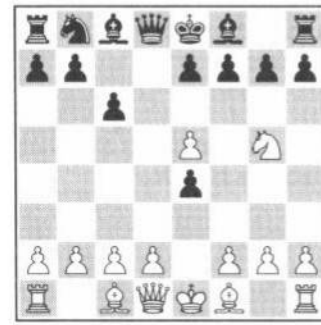
□ **Adrian Skelton**
■ **Igor Khenkin**
Lubniewice 1998

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘e4 5.d4

White does not avoid the exchange of knights and simply continues with his development. Here are some alternatives:

● After 5.♕e2 the correct response is 5...♘xc3 6.dxc3 ♗g4, when 7.h3 ♗xf3 8.♕xf3 e6 9.♗d3 ♘d7 10.♕g3 ♕c7 11.♗f4 ♘c5 was equal in Smyslov-Tipary, Budapest 1949.

● 5.♘xe4 dxe4 6.♘g5



is a sharp attempt. Black has 6...♕d5! 7.d3 (or 7.d4 exd3) 7...exd3, and now:

– 8.♕xd3 ♕xe5+ 9.♗e2 ♕f5 10.♕g3 h6 11.♘f3 g6 12.♗d3 ♕g4 13.♕c5 ♕e6 14.♗c4 ♕xe5+ 15.♘xe5 e6 16.♗f4 ♗g7 17.0-0-0 ♘d7 18.♘xd7 ♗xd7 and Black won in Isonzo-Dautov, Porto San Giorgio 1997.

– 8.♗xd3 ♕xe5+ (8...♕xg2 9.♗c4 ♕g4 10.♕d3 g6? – 10...h6 – 11.♕b3±, Mkrtchian-Bystryakova, Sochi 2005) 9.♗e3 gives compensation. Note that Black should avoid 9...g6? 10.♗c4! e6 11.♕d8+! ♔xd8 12.♘xf7+ ♔e8 13.♘xc5±, Rossolimo-Szabo, Hastings 1949/50.

● 5.♗d3 ♘c5!? (safer is 5...♘xc3 6.dxc3 ♗g4) 6.♗f1 d4 7.♘e2 d3 8.♘f4 ♗f5?!

(8...dxc2) 9.cxd3 ♘xd3+? 10.♗xd3 ♗xd3 11.e6!? (11.♕b3!? ♗a6? – 11...♗f5 12.♕xb7 ♘d7 – 12.♘g5! e6 13.♘xf7!+–) 11...f6 12.♕b3 ♗a6 13.h4 and in this complicated position White is better, but Black won, Cobb-Khenkin, Münster 1997.

● 5.♘b1!? ♕b6! 6.♕e2 ♗g4 7.d3 ♘g5!? (7...♘c5=) 8.♗xg5!? (8.♘bd2 ♘d7 9.h3 ♘xf3+ 10.♘xf3 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 e6∓, Klein-Muratoglu, Dresden 2008) 8...♕xb2 9.c3 ♕xa1 10.♕c2 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 and Black has problems evicting his queen, though he will be winning if he succeeds, Sanchez-Albarracin, Valencia 1990.

● 5.♗e2 is met by 5...♘xc3 6.dxc3 ♗g4 or 6.bxc3 ♗g4.

5...♗g4

Black keeps the tension. Also possible is 5...♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g4 7.c4 e6 8.cxd5 ♕xd5!? 9.c3 c5 10.♗e2 cxd4 11.0-0 d3! 12.♕xd3 ♕xd3 13.♗xd3 ♘c6, Durao-Lalic, Madrid 2001.

6.♗e2

More active is 6.♗d3 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 e6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♖b1 ♕c7 10.c4 0-0 11.h3 ♗h5 12.♕e2, Klovans-Khenkin, Hockenheim rapid 1997.

6...e6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.♗e3 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 0-0

Black has a sound position. His pawn structure is healthy, his bishop is outside the pawn chain, and he has possibilities to attack the centre with ...c5. **10.c4 ♘d7 11.c5?! b6! 12.cxb6 axb6 13.a4 c5** This is already unpleasant for White. **14.♗b5?!** 14.c4! was best. **14...♕c7 15.h3?** 15.♖e1. **15...♗xf3 16.♕xf3 cxd4 17.♗xd4 ♘xe5 18.♕g3 ♗d6** and Black was just a pawn up and won.

The next game sees Black playing the dubious 6...c5. While I cannot recommend this move the game is really too great not to show it here.

□ **Rashid Nezhmetdinov**
■ **Mikhail Kamishov**
Gorky 1950

1.e4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘e4 5.♘e2 ♕b6

Previously Nezhmetdinov had encountered 5...♗f5 6.d3 ♘c5 7.♘fd4 (7.h3! see Mischustov-Khenkin above) 7...e6 8.h4 h6 9.♘xf5 exf5 10.♘d4 g6 11.h5!± ♕e7 12.hxg6 fxg6 13.♘f3 ♘bd7 14.d4 ♘c4 15.♘h4?! ♕e6 16.♗d3 0-0-0 17.c3 ♗e7 18.f3?! ♘xe5! 19.dxe5? (19.fxe4) 19...♕xc5 20.fxe4 dxe4 and Black won in Nezhmetdinov-Grechkin, Tbilisi 1949.

6.d4 c5?!

Dubious is 6...f6?! 7.♘f4! ♗g4 8.♗e2 ♘d7? 9.e6!±, Felgaer-Azmaiparashvili, Dos Hermanas 2005. For 6...e6 see the next game.

7.dxc5

7...♕xc5
Safer is 7...♘xc5 8.♘f4 (or 8.♕xd5 ♘c6 with compensation) 8...e6 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.c4 dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♘c6 13.♕e2, with a slight edge for White, which is an old analysis by Filip.
8.♘ed4 ♘c6
Practice also saw 8...♗g4 9.♗e2 (9.♗b5+!) 9...c6 10.0-0 ♕b6 11.♗c3 ♗c5 12.a3 (12.b4!) 12...♘c6∓, Bezler-Wach, Schaan 1998.
9.♗b5! White has to play it active.
9...♗d7 Or 9...a6?! 10.♗xc6+ bxc6 11.0-0 ♕b6 (11...♗g4 12.♗e3 ♕c4?! 13.c3 e6 14.b3!? ♕xc3 15.♖c1 ♕b2? – 15...♕a5 – 16.♖c2 ♕a3 17.♘xc6 and wins the queen is given by Nezhmetdinov).

12.e6! fxe6 13.♗f4 (strong is 13.♘e5! c5 14.c4!?) 13...g6 14.♗e5 ♘f6?! (14...♖g8) 15.♘g5± ♗h6 16.♘dxe6 (16.♘gxe6!? ♔f7 17.♖e1 c5 18.♘c7 ♖b8 19.♗xf6 ♕xf6 20.♘de6 d4 21.♘xc5±) 16...♗xg5 17.♘xg5 0-0 18.♕d2 ♗f5 and Fischer won, although he holds only a small advantage here, Fischer-Olafsson, Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade 1959.
10.0-0! ♘xe5?
Winning a pawn but the price is too high. Safer was 10...c6.
11.♘xe5 ♗xb5 12.♘xb5 ♕xb5 13.♖e1! ♘f6 Or 13...e6 14.c4 and wins!
14.♗g5 e6 15.c4! ♕a5 If 15...dxc4 then 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.a4! and now Black must take on c5. **16.♗xf6 gxf6**

A classic example of how to play with an edge in development and the opponent's king in the centre. White to play and win:
17.♘xf7! ♔xf7 18.♕h5+ ♔e7 19.cxd5 e5 20.f4! ♕xd5 21.fxe5 f5 22.e6 ♔f6 23.h4! Closing the net around Black's king. Mate or heavy material losses are unavoidable. **23...♗c5+ 24.♔h1 ♕xe6 25.♕h6+** Black resigned.

□ **David Murray**
■ **Jessie Gilbert**
Coventry 2005

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘e4 5.♘e2 ♕b6 6.d4 e6

7.g3

Certainly not the only move at this stage. I analyse:

– 7.♘fg1!? h6 (correct was 7...f6! 8.f3 ♘g5 with unclear play) 8.h4 ♘d7 9.f3 ♘f2? (Black has compensation for the piece after 9...♘ec5! 10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.♘h3 ♘xe5) 10.♔xf2 ♘xe5 11.c3 and White won in Lopez Batlle-Portero, Albacete ch 1991.

– 7.c3 c5 8.♖b1 (here 8.dxc5 ♗xc5 9.♘ed4 ♘c6 10.♗d3 ♗d7 was equal) 8...♘c6 9.♗e3 ♕c7 10.a3 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♕a5+ 12.♘d2 b5 13.♖c1 ♗d7 14.f3 ♘xd2 15.♕xd2 b4 16.axb4 ♗xb4 17.♘c3 ♕b6 18.♗e2 ♘a5 19.♖b1 0-0∓, Agupov-Grischenko, Kazan 2001.

– 7.♘g3 c5 8.♗d3 (or 8.♘xe4 dxe4 9.♘g5 cxd4 10.♘xe4 ♕a5+) 8...♘xg3 9.hxg3 cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♗c5 11.c3 ♘c6 unclear.

– 7.a4 c5 8.a5 ♕c7 is OK for Black.

7...c5 8.♗g2 cxd4 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♘exd4 ♗c5 11.c3 0-0

Black appears to have a decent position.

12.♕d3 f6 13.exf6 ♖xf6 14.♗f4?!

But this is wrong. Correct was 14.b4!, when White is slightly better after 14...♘xd4 15.♘xd4 ♗xd4 16.♕xd4 ♕xd4 17.cxd4 ♗d7 18.♗f4.

14...♕xb2 15.♖ab1 ♕xc3 16.♕xc3 ♘xc3 17.♘xc6 ♘xb1 18.♖c1 ♗a3

White resigned.

CHAPTER 11

Sergey Tiviakov

Queen's Indian: Double Fianchetto

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 g6

The Queen's Indian Defence is one of the most popular openings. And the line with 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 still remains among the most frequently played. Studying it is a must for any Queen's Indian player! But with thousands of games played and loads of theory it is not an easy task... The main line is 5...d5, but with so much theory it is necessary to spend lot of time deeply studying all the lines.

In the present article we shall look at another move – 5...g6, which is not only positionally sound but also can serve as a surprise weapon. In comparison with the variation 5...d5 the arising positions are much more complex, thus 5...g6 is an excellent continuation to play for a win!

The only drawback of 5...g6 is that it is quite slow and gives White the possibility to try to occupy the centre` (with d4-d5 and/or e2-e4 at some point). If White fails to do so then Black has no single problem whatsoever.

From the diagrammed position White has several possible moves. Let's start with a few minor alternatives:

● 6.e3 This move is too slow. After 6...♗g7 7.♗e2 (7.♗d3, planning to play e3-e4 as played by Eingorn a couple of times, deserves attention) 7...0-0 8.0-0 d5 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 Black has successfully solved all his opening problems. The chances are equal after either

– 10.♕c2 c5 11.♘xd5 (11.dxc5 ♘xc3=) 11...♕xd5 12.dxc5 ♕xc5 (12...bxc5) 13.♕xc5 bxc5, or
– 10.♘xd5 ♕xd5 11.♘e1 e5!? (Geller).

● 6.g3 This favourite of the late Tony Miles is likewise too slow. Black effectively gains a tempo compared to 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 g6!?. After 6...♗g7 7.♗g2 0-0 8.0-0 Black can reduce the pressure in the centre with the typical 8...♘e4. After 9.♘xe4 ♗xe4 10.♗g5 Black has a comfortable choice between:
– 10...♕e8 11.♕d2 ♘c6 12.b4 ♖c8 13.♗e3 d5 14.cxd5 ♗xd5 15.♖ad1 a5 16.♗h6 axb4 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.axb4 ♕e7 and a draw was agreed in the game Ubilava-Romanishin, Sochi 1984, and
– 10...♕c8 11.♕d2 ♘c6 12.♖ac1 ♖b8 13.♗e3 b5

when it turns out that all the black pieces are developed harmonically, and cooperate excellently with each other. Miles-Chuchelov, Cappelle la Grande 1994.

● 6.♕d3 Although rare, this move is interesting and deserves attention. The plus of this move is that White directly threatens to occupy the centre by e2-e4; and, as it also covers the f3-knight, it renders the exchange on f3 useless (6...♗xf3 is the main answer after 6.♕c2). After 6.♕d3 Black's answer is more or less forced – 6...d5 since it has been demonstrated that after 6...♗g7 7.e4 d5 8.cxd5 exd5 9.e5 White has the upper hand due to his strong centre. After 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗g5

Black can choose between the development of the bishop to e7 and g7 (both equally good). Then the awkward position of the queen on d3 will play its role, allowing Black to equalize without many problems:
– 8...♗g7. In the ending arising after 9.♕c3+ ♕e7 10.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 Black has nothing to worry about, as the following game demonstrates: 11.g3 ♘d7 12.♖c1 h6 13.♗e3 c6 14.♗h3 ♖he8 15.0-0 ♔f8 and Black managed to beat his legendary opponent. Kortchnoi-Atlas, Pulvermühle 2006.
– 8...♗e7. I wanted to keep the pieces on the board, avoiding the ending. 9.g3 0-0 10.♗g2 ♘e4 11.♗xe7 ♕xe7 12.0-0 ♘d7 13.e3 a5 14.♕c2 f5 Black has no problems to solve, but playing for a win is also problematic. The game Vorobiov-Tiviakov, Moscow 2008, ended in a draw.
We will look more deeply at 6.d5, 6.♗f4, and, especially, 6.♗g5 and 6.♕c2.

Variation A – 6.d5

This move is much more straightforward! It was popular some time ago, but nowadays it is a rare guest in tournament practice since a convincing plan for Black has been found.

□ **Yury Zeziulkin**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Voronezh 1986

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 g6 6.d5 exd5

This is stronger than 6...♗g7 7.e4, since then after the exchange on d5 White obtains the extra possibility to take on d5 with the e-pawn.

7.cxd5 ♗g7 8.g3 0-0 9.♗g2 c5!

After 9...c6 Black must be ready for the complications after 10.d6!?

10.0-0 d6 11.e4 ♘bd7

Black has a favourable type of Indian Defence position where he can not only create enough counter-play on the queenside but also seize the initiative. Usually the presence of the bishop on b7 is a drawback for Black, but here the bishop can be very useful after being developed to a6, or attacking the d5-pawn (preventing all possible breaks in the centre with e4-e5).

12.a4

12.♗f4 is answered by 12...♕b8, followed by ...♘h5, ...♗a6 and ...b5, with excellent play.

12...♖e8 13.♘d2

Or 13.♖e1 a6, followed by ...♕c7.

13...a6

14.f4?!

Better was 14.♘c4 ♘e5 15.♘xe5 ♖xe5 16.♗f4 ♖e8 (16...♖e7!?), with an approximately equal position.

14...♕b8 15.h3?!

This is a loss of time. The immediate 15.g4 was better.

15...b5 16.♕b3

Again 16.g4 was better.

16...c4 17.♕b4

17...a5!

Now the queen is trapped, leading to material losses for White.

18.♕xb5 ♕a7+ 19.♔h2

Or 19.♖f2 ♗a6 20.♕xa5 ♘c5, with a huge advantage for Black.

19...♖ec8 20.b4 cxb3 21.♕xb3

21.♗b2 could prolong resistance, although Black should win after 21...♗a6 22.♕xb3 ♘c5.

21...♖xc3 22.♕d1 ♗a6 23.♖e1 ♕f2 24.♘f3

White resigned.

Variation B – 6.♗f4

This developing move isn't dangerous for Black since it doesn't contribute to the main strategic idea in the position – occupation of the centre by means of e2-e4 and d4-d5. Moreover, the bishop on f4 has few perspectives and must later be moved to h2 (after playing h3).

□ **Zdenko Kozul**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Plovdiv EUch 2008

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3 ♗b7 4.d4 e6 5.a3 g6

Although I have played this move quite often it came as a surprise for my opponent who started thinking a lot.

6.♗f4 ♗g7 7.e3 0-0 8.h3

Here 8.♗d3!?, intending e4, is more promising for White.

8...d6 9.♗e2 ♘bd7 10.0-0

10...♘e4

Before I had played the more complex 10...♖e8, keeping more pieces on board. After 11.♕c2 e5 12.dxe5 dxe5 the position is equal, for example: 13.♗g3 e4 14.♘d2 a6 15.♖fd1 h6 Tjiam-Tiviakov, Groningen 2007.

In this tournament I was playing simple chess, exchanging a pair of knights.

11.♘xe4 ♗xe4 12.♗h2 ♕e7 13.♘d2

This move is new, but it doesn't change the evaluation of the position as equal:

– 13.♕a4 e5 14.♘d2 ♗b7 15.♗f3 ½-½, Soppe-Sunye Neto, Buenos Aires 1991.

– 13.b4 e5 14.♖c1 a5 15.♘d2 ½-½, Goormachtigh-Janssen, Sas van Gent 1998.

– 13.♖c1 ♖fd8 14.b4 c5 15.♕b3 a5 16.♖fd1 axb4 17.axb4 ♖a7 18.dxc5 ½-½, Bischoff-Langrock, Bad Zwesten 2004.

13...♗b7 14.♗f3 ♗xf3 15.♕xf3

Or 15.♘xf3 e5, with equal play.

15...e5

16.♕c6?!

Played too optimistically. Here risky play for a win is being punished severely. White gets a worse position.

White should have played carefully for a draw with 16.♖ae1 or 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 with equal chances.

Note that 16.d5?! e4 is slightly better for Black. The pawn on b2 is much more important than the black central pawn!

16...exd4 17.exd4 ♗xd4 18.♕xc7 ♗xb2

Or 18...♖fc8 with a plus, similar to the game.

19.♖a2

After both 19.♗xd6 ♕d8 and 19.♖ac1 ♕d8 20.♕xd6 ♘c5 Black is slightly better due to the pawn weaknesses on a3 and c4.

19...♖fc8 20.♕b7

White's desire to keep the queens on board is understandable, but here it was better to exchange the queens: 20.♕xd6 ♕xd6 21.♗xd6, with only a slightly worse ending.

20...♗f6?!

Played without much thinking. I saw that after the text I get a better position with good winning prospects. However, I failed to calculate the main variation till the end. After

20...♗e5! 21.♗xe5 dxe5 22.♘e4 ♔f8! (as the Fritz analysis module indicates) followed by ♘d7-c5, Black keeps his extra pawn.

21.♘e4 ♘c5 22.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 23.♕d5 ♖e8

Black must take the e-file and stop thinking about defending the d6 pawn.

24.♖e2!

An excellent defensive resource! Both 24.♕xd6 ♕xd6 25.♗xd6 ♖ac8 and 24.♗xd6 ♖ad8 are good for Black.

24...♖ad8?!

A serious mistake, letting slip almost my entire advantage. I failed to notice that after 24...♖xe2 25.♕xa8+ ♔g7 White cannot take the pawn on a7 with 26.♕xa7?, because the queen is suddenly trapped after 26...♕d8!! followed by ...♖e2-e7.

25.♕xd6?!

Played too beautifully. This move allows Black to bring his king into the centre and then to the queenside where it defends the pawns a7 and b6 with decisive effect.

After the simple 25.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 26.♕xd6 (26.♗xd6 ♖d8 27.♖d1 ♕e6∓) 26...♕c3∓ (26...♕xd6 27.♗xd6 ♖c8∓), White would have kept good drawing chances.

25...♕xd6 26.♖xe8+ ♕f8!

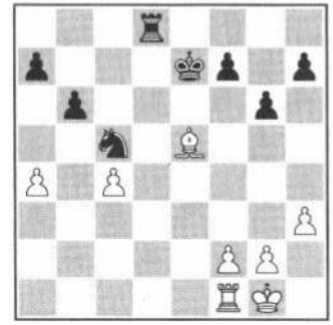
Simple but very strong!

27.♖xf8+ ♔xf8

Now because of the weaknesses on a3 and c4 White faces a very difficult task.

28.♗e5 ♔e7 29.a4?!

A mistake in a time-trouble. White is aiming to exchange one weak pawn. Unfortunately for him the pawn can be fixed one move later, where it will become an easy target for the black pieces.



29...♔e6!?

I was reluctant to put my pawn on f6, where it can be attacked by the white bishop, although Fritz likes 29...f6∓.

30.♗c3

After 30.♖e1 ♘d3 31.♗c7+ ♘xe1 32.♗xd8 ♘d3 Black obtains a winning ending.

30...a5!?

It was also possible to take the pawn on a4 by 30...♘xa4 31.♖e1+ ♔d7 32.♗f6 ♖a8!, with a winning position.

31.♖e1+ ♔d7 32.g4

After 32.♖a1 ♔c6 the pawns a4 and c4 will sooner or later fall. They cannot be defended by the bishop.

32...♘xa4 33.♗f6 ♖e8 34.♖d1+ ♔c6

The rest is very easy. White just played until the end of the time-trouble and then resigned.

35.♔g2 ♘c5 36.♔f3 ♘d7 37.♗a1 ♘e5+ 38.♔f4

After 38.♗xe5 ♖xe5 the passed pawn a5 decides.

38...♘xc4 39.♔g5 ♖e2 40.♖d4 ♘d6 41.♖f4 Or 41.f3 b5–+. **41...♖xf2! 42.♗e5 ♖xf4 43.♗xf4 ♘e4+ 44.♔h6 ♘f2**
White resigned.

Variation C – 6.♗g5

The bishop on g5 is well-placed, since the f6-knight is pinned, thus supporting the advance e2-e4. An additional advantage is that after 6.♗g5 ♗g7 7.♕c2 ♗xf3 8.gxf3 ♘c6 9.e3 the bishop is already developed to g5, allowing speedy development and long castling. Please, compare this to 6.♕c2 ♗xf3 7.gxf3 ♘c6 8.e3 (Variation D) when the bishop is locked in on c1!

□ **Alon Greenfeld**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Kolkata 2007

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3 ♗b7 4.d4 e6 5.a3 g6 6.♗g5

6...h6

This weakens the kingside structure too soon, limiting Black's options. It was more accurate to play 6...♗g7, and now:
– 7.♕c2 h6 8.♗h4 d6 9.e4 g5 10.♗g3 ♘h5 (typical play by Black, which is also seen in other lines of the Nimzo-Indian and Queen's Indian Defence) 11.0-0-0 ♘xg3 12.hxg3 g4 13.♘h4?! (13.♘g1 would have given White more possibilities to bring the knight back into play via e2-f4) 13...♘c6 14.♘e2 ♕d7 15.d5 ♘e7 16.dxe6 fxe6 17.♘d4 0-0-0 18.♗e2 ♖hg8 and Black was fine, and even clearly better after 19.c5? which unnecessarily gave up a pawn, Almeida-Tiviakov, Alajuela 2008.
– 7.e3 d6 8.d5 0-0 9.♗e2 ♘bd7 10.0-0 h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3

And now, rather than 12...♘h5 13.♘d4 ♘xg3 14.hxg3 I.Sokolov-Lobron, Groningen 1993, Black should play 12...♘c5. After 13.dxe6 fxe6 14.♘d4 ♕d7 15.f3 Gulko-Vaganian, Reggio Emilia 1991/92 Black should consider Gulko's 15...a5!? with unclear play.

7.♗h4 ♗g7 8.e3

Here 8.♕c2!? d6 9.e4 can lead to the same position as in my game against Almeida. While after 8.d5 exd5 9.cxd5 0-0 10.e3 Black can react with the characteristic 10...c5 when his chances are at least not worse. Sakaev-Tiviakov, Sochi 1986, went: 11.♕d2 d6 12.♗c4 ♘bd7 13.0-0 ♖e8 14.♖fe1 a6, with decent play.

8...d6 9.d5!? ♕e7 10.dxe6 ♕xe6

Black has to take the pawn with the queen, since 10...fxe6 is too dangerous because of the weakness of pawn g6.

11.♗e2 0-0 12.♘d4 ♕c8 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6

Although White is still slightly better, a draw was agreed here (Greenfeld had spent a lot of time in the opening).

Variation D – 6.♕c2

This move is the main reply to 5...g6. White threatens to play e2-e4. Black can prevent it in two ways: with 6...d5 or with our preference 6...♗xf3.

Please, note that 6...♗g7 7.e4 is considered to be extremely dangerous for Black, we shall not be looking at this line here. Another way for Black to react is 6...c5, but to mix different plans is usually not a good idea. After 7.e4 cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♗g7 9.♗g5 White is slightly better, the square d6 is weak and it is not easy for Black to play liberating d7-d5.

Now to briefly consider 6...d5. This move is completely playable: it leads to a slightly worse but very solid position. There is not much theory here and play can develop according to the basic chess principles for this type of position. For example, 7.cxd5 exd5 8.g3 (or 8.♗f4 a6 9.e3 ♗g7 with a small plus for White) 8...♗g7 9.♗f4 0-0 10.♗g2 (10.♘b5 can be parried by 10...♘a6 after which it is impossible to take pawn c7 by 11.♗xc7? because of 11...♕d7 12.a4 ♖fc8 13.♘e5 ♖xc7∓) 10...♘a6 11.0-0 and here in the game Alexandria-Litinskaya, Malmö 1986, Black should have played 11...c5, with only a slightly inferior position.

As I stated above, we will focus on the principled 6...♗xf3. Now White must decide whether to take the bishop with the e- or the g-pawn.

For 7.exf3 see the game Mkrtchian-Romanishin, while 7.gxf3 will be studied in Van Wely-Tiviakov.

□ **Lilit Mkrtchian**
■ **Oleg Romanishin**
Solin 2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.♘c3 ♗b7 5.a3 g6 6.♕c2 ♗xf3 7.exf3 ♗g7

8.♗g5

Please note that the immediate 8.d5 (preventing Black from playing ♘b8-c6) poses no danger for Black since the pawn can be undermined at some point by c7-c6. For example, 8.d5 0-0 9.♗e2 (or 9.♗g5 exd5 10.cxd5 ♕e8+ 11.♗e2 c6 with equal chances) 9...c6 10.dxe6 dxe6 with good play for Black.

After 8.♗e3 (there is not much difference between this move and the text, the inclusion of ...h6 is fairly meaningless) 8...d5 (8...c6! 9.0-0-0 d5 is a more accurate move order, preventing White from exchanging on d5) 9.0-0-0 (White could have exploited Black's inaccuracy with 9.cxd5!, with a plus) 9...c6 10.g4 ♘bd7 11.h4. Black hasn't castled yet and can meet this move with 11...h5 stopping the development of White's initiative on the kingside. Black was OK after 12.cxd5 ♘xd5 13.♗g5 ♗h6 14.♘e4 hxg4 15.♗a6 ♕c7 in Bator-Nikolic, Panormo 2001.

In general, it is important to understand that Black should not be in a hurry to castle kingside where the king can be attacked quickly. He must be ready to keep the king in the centre as in the game Bator-Nikolic or castle queenside as in the present game.

8...h6 9.♗e3 c6 In this game Black chooses the correct move order. **10.0-0-0 d5 11.h4 ♘bd7 12.g4 dxc4**

12...h5 could have been played as well, which would have brought us to the same position as in the game Bator-Nikolic.

13.♗xc4 ♘d5 14.♔b1 ♘7f6 15.♘e4 ♕d7

In this complex position the chances of both sides are approximately equal.

16.♗c1 0-0-0 17.♗b3 ♔b8 18.♖he1 ♘e8 19.♖d3 ♖c8 20.♗a4 h5 21.♖h1 ♘d6 22.♕e2 ♘b5

An unusual place for the black knight, which will hop around for a bit more.

23.♕d1 ♔a8 24.♗g5 f5 25.♘g3 hxg4 26.fxg4 ♘d6 27.f3 ♘f7 28.♗c1 ♕d6

Black is fine, the game eventually ended in a draw after several mistakes from both sides.

□ **Loek van Wely**
■ **Sergey Tiviakov**
Wijk aan Zee 1996

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 g6 6.♕c2 ♗xf3 7.gxf3 ♘c6

7...♗g7 allows White to play the useful 8.♗g5 meeting 8...♘c6 by 9.e3, winning extra time for his development.

With the text White's piece coordination is disturbed.

8.e3

8.d5 ♘d4 9.♕d1 c5 gives White no chances to fight for an advantage whatsoever.

8...♗g7 9.d5!

After 9.f4 the best way for Black to react is by 9...♘e7 with the idea to play ...c6 and ...d5, fixing White's pawn structure in the centre. If White plays 10.e4 then after 10...c6 11.e5 ♘h5 12.♘e4 ♘f5 Black gets sufficient counter-play.

9...♘e7 Here 9...♘e5 deserves practical tests. **10.e4 ♘h5** 10...0-0 11.♗g5 d6 is also possible. **11.♗e3**

11...d6

After 11...e5!? 12.0-0-0 White is slightly better.

11...c6!? is a better move than the text, leading to an equal position after 12.♖d1 (both 12.d6 ♘c8, and 12.0-0-0 cxd5 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♗a6 0-0 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♖xd5 ♕f6 are unclear) 12...0-0 13.♗h3 (planning 14.dxe6 fxe6 15.♗e3) 13...cxd5 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♖xd5 ♕f6 with equal chances.

12.f4!

Now White seizes the initiative.
If 12.♗h3 then 12...♕d7!? (12...e5 13.0-0-0±) intending 13.dxe6?! fxe6 14.♘d5 0-0 15.♗g5 ♘c6 planning 16...♘d4. Black can also consider 15...♖ae8!? 16.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 17.♗xe7 ♕xe7.
Dubious is 12.dxe6?! fxe6 13.♗h3 ♕d7.
12...♗h6 13.♕d2 13.♘e2 e5 (13...0-0!?) 14.♕d2 transposes to the game. **13...e5** Not 13...0-0?! 14.♗e2 ♘g7 15.h4±. However, 13...♕d7!? deserved serious attention, planning to meet 14.♗e2 with 14...♘g7±.
14.♘e2 14.fxe5 ♗xe3 15.♕xe3 dxe5 is equal because of Black's control over square f4. **14...0-0** 14...♕d7 is met by 15.fxe5!? ♗xe3 16.♕xe3 dxe5 17.♗h3 (17.c5!?) 17...♕d6 18.b4!? planning c5. **15.0-0-0 ♕d7** White is better after both 15...f5!? and 15...exf4. **16.h4** 16.fxe5?! ♗xe3 17.♕xe3 dxe5 18.♗h3 ♕d6 is unclear. **16...f5 17.fxe5** If 17.♗h3 then 17...♕a4!?. **17...♗xe3 18.♕xe3 dxe5**

19.f3
Black has compensation after 19.exf5 ♘xf5 (19...♕xf5 20.♗h3) 20.♕xe5 ♖ae8. Instead 19.♗h3 ♕d6 (19...♕a4!?) 20.f3 transposes to the game.
19...♕d6 20.♗h3 ♔h8?!
Stronger were 20...♖ae8!?±, or 20...♕f6± (e.g. 21.♕c3 ♖ae8 22.f4 ♘c8).
21.♔b1?!
White fails to find the move which could have created serious problems for Black. Better was 21.♕c3± threatening f3-f4.
21...♕f6 22.♕c3?!
White loses the thread and commits another mistake. He could have kept the initiative with 22.c5!?±, or 22.♖c1!? followed by c5.
22...♖ae8 23.f4?
Here again 23.c5± or 23.♖df1!? was better.

23...♘c8!
Black is in time to meet White's advance. And suddenly the course of the game changes; it is now White who stands worse!
24.exf5 24.fxe5 ♖xe5∓.
24...♘xf4! 25.♘xf4 25.♘g3 ♘xh3 26.♖xh3 gxf5∓; 25.♖he1 ♘xe2 26.♖xe2 gxf5∓.
25...exf4 26.♕xf6+ ♖xf6
Black has the upper hand in the ending, which after a series of mistakes from both sides, finishes in a draw.
27.fxg6?!
Black is better after 27.♖de1 ♖xe1+ 28.♖xe1 ♘d6 29.fxg6 ♖xg6 or 29...hxg6. Stronger was 27.♖d4 gxf5 (27...f3 28.♖f4) 28.♖xf4 ♘d6 29.♖hf1∓.
27...♘d6! 27...hxg6 28.♗xc8 (28.♖de1 ♖xe1+ 29.♖xe1 ♘d6∓) 28...♖xc8∓.
28.gxh7 28.♖de1 ♖xe1+ 29.♖xe1 ♖xg6 with a strong passed pawn as in the game.
28...f3

29.♗e6 f2 30.♖hf1 ♘xc4?!

Better is 30...♘e4 31.♖d3 ♖e7! winning.

31.♖d3 c6 32.dxc6

Again Van Wely finds the only way to avoid an immediate loss: 32.b3 cxd5 33.bxc4 ♖cxc6−+; 32.d6 ♖fxe6 33.d7 ♖d8 34.♖xf2 ♖e7!?−+.

32...♖fxe6

Here 32...♖exe6!? was another serious winning attempt. As this is an opening article I will not present my analysis of lines like 33.♖d8+ ♔xh7 34.c7 here.

33.♖xf2 ♖xc6

Or 33...♘e5!?∓.

34.♖d7 a5

Perhaps 34...a6!? planning ...b5 was simpler, but in time trouble I lost the thread.

35.♖b7

35...♖ec8?!

Not 35...♘d6?! 36.♖f6, but 35...♖h6 36.♖f4 ♘d2+ 37.♔a2 ♘e4 was still good for Black.

36.♔a2 ♖h6

Now 36...♘d6!?∓ could have been considered.

37.♖c2! ♖hc6

37...♖xh7 38.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 39.♔b3 b5∓. Not 37...♖xh4? 38.h3 ♘d6 39.♖xc8+ ♘xc8 40.♖b8 ♖h2+ 41.♔b1 with a draw.

38.♔b3 ♘d6?!

38...♖c5∓/∓.

39.♖xc6 ♖xc6 40.♖a7 ♘f5?

The final mistake before the time control! 40...♘c4 or 40...♖c5 were correct.

41.♔a4

Now White can draw.

41...♖c2 42.b3

42.b4!? axb4 43.♔xb4 is also a draw.

42...♘e3

Black is in Zugzwang after 42...♘d6 43.♖d7 ♖c6 44.b4.

43.♔b5 ♖c3 44.b4

Even 44.♔xb6 ♖xb3+ would have led to a draw after 45.♔c5 ♖xa3 (45...♖c3+ 46.♔b5 ♘c4 47.a4=) 46.♔b5 ♖b3+ 47.♔a4. But not 45.♔xa5?? ♘c4+ 46.♔a4 (46.♔a6 ♖b6+ mate) 46...♖xa3+ winning.

44...♘c4

44...axb4 45.axb4 ♘d5 (45...♘c4 46.♖c7=) 46.♖d7 also draws.

45.bxa5 bxa5 46.a4 ♖c1 47.♖e7 ♖c2 48.♖a7

Draw.

The final conclusion: the variation with 5...g6 is an excellent surprise weapon in one of the most frequently played lines of the Queen's Indian Defence. While it is positionally sound, the arising positions are still very complex and difficult for an unprepared opponent; and even a prepared opponent will find it difficult to obtain an advantage. So, it is an excellent weapon to play for a win with the black pieces!

CHAPTER 12

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Sicilian: Romanishin Variation

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗b5+ ♗d7 4.c4!?

Oleg Romanishin is renowned as one of the most 'intellectual' grandmasters. In the 1970s and 1980s he devised a number of important opening novelties. He arrived at 4.c4 (rather than the main line 4.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 5.c4) after studying the Lasker Variation 4.a4.

Romanishin's reasoning was as follows: if subsequently White sets up a Maroczy structure with c2-c4 and d2-d4, then – with his pawns on light squares – his light-squared bishop is a weak piece and its exchange should be advantageous to White.

Rather than helping Black to develop (4.♗xd7+), Romanishin leaves the bishop on b5 – maintaining the tension. Should Black exchange on b5 then his knight no longer has access to square c6. A negative factor is, of course, that after the c4-pawn has gone to b5, it is easier for Black to fight for the centre.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗b5+ ♗d7 4.c4!?

In reply to White's plan Black has several possibilities:

I 4...♗xb5
II 4...♘f6
III 4...♘c6

Variation I

4...♗xb5 5.cxb5 ♘f6 6.♘c3

6...e5!?

This is an attempt to forestall White's play in the centre.

After 6...e6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.a4 0-0 9.d4 cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♘bd7 11.♖e1 ♖c8 12.a5 a6 13.bxa6 bxa6 14.♕e2 ♘b8 15.♗d2 White has strong play on the queenside, Maier-Pucher, France 2006/07.

In the event of 6...g6 7.0-0 ♗g7 8.d4 cxd4 9.♘xd4 (very interesting is 9.♕xd4 0-0 10.♗d2 ♘bd7 11.♖fd1 ♘c5 12.♕e3, preparing b2-b4)

● If 9...0-0 then 10.♗e3 ♘bd7 11.f4 ♖c8 12.♕e2 ♘c5 13.♗f2 d5!? 14.e5 ♘fe4 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.♗e3 e6 17.♘b3 f6!? 18.exf6 ♕xf6 19.♗d4 ♕h4 20.♗xg7 ♔xg7 21.♕e3 ♕f6! with a complicated game, Romanishin-Savon, Vilnius 1975.

● Or 9...♘bd7 10.♕e2 0-0 11.♖d1 and now:

– After 11...♕c7 12.♗e3 ♘e5 13.♖ac1 ♖fc8 14.h3 ♕a5 15.♘b3 ♕d8 16.♗d4 White is slightly better, Romanishin-Kupreichik, Erevan zonal 1982.

– Likewise, 11...♖c8 12.♔h1 ♕c7 13.♗g5 h6 14.♗h4 e6 15.f3 d5 16.exd5 exd5 17.♗g3 ♕c4 18.♕d2 ♘b6 19.♖ac1 ♕b4 20.b3 promises White a minimal advantage, Moutousis-Macieja, Greece 2004.

7.0-0 ♗e7 8.d3 ♘bd7 9.♗g5

9.♘e1 is also interesting, with the idea of preparing f2-f4.

9...0-0 10.♕b3

With the further plan of ♘d2, ♗xf6, ♘c4 and ♘e3, occupying the powerful d5-square.

Variation II

4...♘f6 5.♘c3

Now in Romanishin-Pinter, Szirak 1986, Black forced the issue with 5...a6. After 6.♗xd7+ ♘bxd7 7.0-0 e6 8.b3 ♗e7 9.d4 cxd4 10.♘xd4 0-0 11.♗b2 ♖e8 12.♔h1 ♘c5 13.♕f3 ♕b6 14.♖ad1 ♖ed8 15.♖fe1 ♕c7 16.♕g3 ♘h5 17.♕e3 ♗f8 18.♕f3 ♘f6 19.h3 ♘cd7 Black sort of maintained the balance in this hedgehog. More common are 5...g6 or 5...e6.

Subvariation A

5...g6 6.d4

After the critical 6.e5!? dxe5 7.♘xe5 ♗xb5

8.cxb5 ♘bd7 9.♘c4 ♘b6 10.d3 ♗g7 11.♕f3 ♘bd5 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗g5 ♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♘d5 15.d4 cxd4 16.cxd4 h6 Black has no problems, Shirazi-Tihonov, Avoine 2004.

6...cxd4 7.♘xd4

7...♗g7

Weaker is 7...♘c6 8.c5! ♘xd4 9.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10.♕xd4 dxc5 11.♕xc5 ♗g7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗f4 ♖fc8 14.♕e3 ♖c4 15.♖ad1 ♕e6 16.f3 a6 17.♖f2! and then ♖fd2, with advantage to White in view of his strong pressure on the d-file, Shirazi-Fressinet, Montpellier 2001.

8.0-0 0-0 9.♗e3 ♘c6 10.f3 ♖c8 11.♖c1 a6

Finally Black questions the bishop.

12.♗xc6 ♗xc6 13.♕d2 ♖e8 14.♖fd1 ♗d7 15.b3

Despite the bishop pair, White still has a slight plus; he has control of the centre and clearly more space.

Subvariation B

5...e6 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.d4 cxd4

8.♘xd4

8.♕xd4 is very interesting and requires testing in practice: 8...♘c6 9.♗xc6 (9.♕d3 0-0 10.♗f4!? may be better, with a minimal advantage) 9...♗xc6 (after 9...bxc6 there is the strong move 10.c5, breaking up Black's pawn structure) 10.b3 0-0 11.♗b2 ♕a5 12.♖ad1 a6 13.a3, and again it appears that White is slightly better.

8...0-0 9.♗e3 ♘c6 10.♕e2 ♘xd4 11.♗xd4 a6 12.♗xd7 ♘xd7

Despite the exchanges, White is slightly better. He has several possible plans, for example, 13.f4 with the idea of f4-f5, or

13.♖ac1, then b2-b3 and ♖fd1, with play in the centre. Although the first plan is undoubtedly the most critical and logical.

Variation III

4...♘c6 5.♘c3 g6

The closing of the centre by 5...e5 6.0-0 ♘f6 7.a3! a5 8.d3 ♗e7 9.♗g5 0-0 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♘d5 leads to a typical position, where White's control of the d5-point guarantees him the more comfortable game.

Subvariation A

6.d4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♗g7

8.♗xc6!?

Yudasin-De Firmian, Erevan Olympiad 1996, saw 8.♗e3 ♘f6 9.f3 0-0 10.♖c1 ♘xd4 11.♗xd4 ♗xb5 12.♘xb5 a6 13.♘c3 b5 14.cxb5 axb5 15.a3 ♕a5 16.0-0 b4 with equality.

8...bxc6

Or 8...♗xc6 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♕a4 with a small advantage for White.

9.c5! dxc5 10.♘b3 c4 11.♘c5

And for the pawn White has the initiative.

Subvariation B

6.0-0 ♘f6

7.d3!?

7.d4 transposes into Variation IIA above after 7...cxd4 ♘xd4 ♗g7 9.♗e3 0-0..

7...♗g7 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗e3 0-0 10.h3 e5 11.♘h2 ♘h5 12.♘d5 ♗e6 13.♕d2 ♔h7 14.g4 ♘f4!?

Not wanting to retreat to f6.

15.♗xf4 exf4 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♘xf4 ♖b8 18.♖ab1 ♕g5 19.♘f3

And Black's two bishops do not compensate for White's extra pawn, Romanishin-Tukmakov, Erevan 1971.

CHAPTER 13

Jeroen Bosch

Modern Provocation

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 ♘c6

□ **Nikola Nestorovic**
■ **Milko Popchev**
Stara Pazova 2008

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 ♘c6

A surprising move that has all the characteristics of a typical SOS. Black seemingly forgets to make any pawn moves in the centre and provokes 4.d5 (not the most popular reply in practice). Bulgarian GM Milko Popchev is an ardent supporter, as is Danish IM Jens Ove Fries-Nielsen. Notably, 3...♘c6 has been adopted by American grandmaster Larry Christiansen. Adherents of the Modern Defence will usually play 3...d6. In practice both 3...c6 and 3...c5 are also played. More important for the subject under investigation here is the shocking 3...d5. I refer the reader to SOS-1, Chapter 13, p.106.

4.♗e3

This is most popular in practice. A serious alternative is **4.d5**.

Now the retreat **4...♘b8** is a favourite of Fries Nielsen. Black is apparently satisfied at having provoked d4-d5 at the cost of two tempi. Two sample games:

– 5.♘f3 d6 6.h3 ♘f6 7.♗c4 0-0 8.0-0 c6 9.a4 b6 10.♖e1 ♗b7 11.♗g5 ♘bd7 12.dxc6 ♗xc6 13.♘d4 ♗b7 14.♘d5 ♖c8 15.♗a2 ♘c5?! 16.♗xf6! exf6 17.♘c3?! f5! 18.exf5 ♕f6 19.fxg6 hxg6 20.♘dc2±, Glek-Fries

Nielsen, Germany Bundesliga 2004/05.
– 5.♗e3 d6 6.♕d2 c6 7.♘f3 ♘f6 8.a4 0-0 9.h3 a5 10.♗e2 ♘a6 11.0-0 gave White a typical space advantage in a Pirc-like position, Jansa-Fries Nielsen, Gausdal 1992.
It is more active after 4.d5 to play **4...♘d4**

● 5.♘b1!? is a tricky move to trap the knight 5...c6 (5...c5? 6.c3 ♕a5 7.♘a3 b5 8.♗d2 won a piece in Kasparov-Ramon Perez, Zaragoza simul 1986) 6.c3 (or 6.a4 cxd5 7.c3 ♘e6) 6...♘b5 7.♘f3 (7.♗xb5 cxb5 8.♗e3 d6 9.♗d4 ♘f6 10.♘f3 0-0 11.♘bd2 e5 12.dxe6 ♗xe6 13.0-0 a6 14.♖e1 is perhaps a tad better for White, Gullaksen-Fries Nielsen, Klaksvik 2005) 7...d6 8.♗xb5 cxb5 9.♗e3 ♘f6 10.♘bd2 0-0 is approximately equal, Lanc-Zyla, Loosdorf 1993.
● 5.♘ce2 ♘xe2 6.♗xe2 d6 7.♗b5+ c6! 8.♗c4 ♘f6 9.♕e2 0-0 10.♘f3 b5 11.♗b3 a5 12.dxc6 a4 13.♗d5 ♖b8 (13...♕c7!) 14.a3 ♕c7 15.0-0 e6 16.♗a2 ♕xc6 was OK for Black in Nisipeanu-Bartha, Odorheiu Secuiesc 1993.
● After **5.♗e3 c5** (perhaps the rare 5...e5!? 6.dxe6 – 6.♘b1 c6 – 6...♘xe6 7.g4?! c6 8.♗g2 h5 9.gxh5 ♖xh5 10.♘ge2 ♗h6 11.♗xh6 ♘xh6 12.♕d2 ♕g5 13.♕xg5 ♖xg5 14.♔f1?! b6 15.f4 ♖c5 16.♔e1 ♗a6 17.♔d2 0-0-0 18.a4 d5, which was better for Black in A.Smith-Hoi, Valby 2008) White has some advantage in such lines as 6.♘ge2 ♕b6 7.♖b1 d6 and 6.♕d2 ♘f6 7.f3 d6 8.♘ge2 ♘xe2 9.♗xe2 ♕b6 10.0-0-0 ♗d7 11.♗h6 ♗xh6 12.♕xh6 0-0-0 13.♔b1 ♔b8 14.♖he1 with a slight pull in London-Christiansen, New York 1989.
There is also a direct attempt at refuting Black's set-up: **6.♘a4!?**. The threat is 7.c3, while pawn c5 may fall as well in certain lines.
Now after 6...♕a5+?! 7.c3 the move 7...d6?? loses a piece after 8.b4! cxb4 9.♗xd4 1-0, Schäfer-Seehaus, Bensheim 1998. Stronger is 7...♘b5 which worked out well for Black after 8.♘xc5?! ♘xc3! 9.♕d2 b6 10.♘b3?! ♘xe4! 11.♕xa5 bxa5 12.f3 ♘d6∓, Fernandez Romero-Ortega Valle, Dos Hermanas 2001. However, a note of warning: 8.♗xb5 ♕xb5 9.♕b3 is surprisingly hard to meet, Black will lose a pawn.
Therefore Black plays **6...d6**, when after **7.c3**

Black appears to be in trouble:
– 7...b5 8.♗xd4 (8.cxd4 bxa4 9.♕xa4+ ♗d7 10.♗b5 is also better for White, while 8.♘xc5 dxc5 9.cxd4 cxd4 10.♗xb5+ ♔f8 11.♗d2 ♘f6 – 11...♖b8 – 12.♗d3 ♕b6 13.♘f3 ♘d7 14.b4 was winning for White in Skytte-Sivertsen, Holbaek 2001) 8...cxd4 9.♗xb5+ ♔f8 (or 9...♗d7 10.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 11.cxd4+–) 10.♘e2 dxc3 11.♘axc3 ♖b8

12.0-0 and Black was worse in Ciric-Raicevic, Belgrade 1991.

– The risky piece sacrifice 7...e5?! is hard to believe, but 8.cxd4 exd4 9.♗d2 ♘f6 10.f3 (10.♗d3) 10...0-0 11.♗d3 (11.b3 to have square b2 available for the knight, fails to 11...♘xe4! 12.fxe4 ♕h4+ 13.♔e2 f5! with tremendous play for the two sacrificed knights) 11...♕e8! 12.♗f4? ♘xd5 13.♗xd6 ♘e3 14.♕e2 ♕xa4 clearly favoured Black in De Firmian-Fries Nielsen, Farum 1993. Investigating 7...e5 could be worth your while. It certainly is hard to meet in practice.

In case of **4.♘f3** Christiansen plays 4...d6 For example: 5.d5 ♘e5 (some players like 5...♘b8 having provoked d4-d5, Black will continue with ...c6 and ...♗g4) 6.♘xe5 ♗xe5 7.♗d3 c6 8.0-0 ♗g7 9.♗f4 ♘f6 10.♕d2 ♕b6 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.e5 dxe5 13.♗xe5 0-0 14.♘a4 ♕d8 15.♖fe1 ♗f5 16.♖ad1 ♗xd3 17.♕xd3 ♕a5 18.b3 ♖ad8 and play was equal in Jansa-Christiansen, Germany Bundesliga 1988/89.

By analogy to our main game 4...d5?! looks dubious here because of 5.exd5 ♘b4 6.♗b5+. Still, 6...♔f8!? (6...♗d7) 7.a3 ♘xd5 8.♗c4 ♘gf6 9.0-0 h5 10.♗g5 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♘e4 12.♖e1 ♘xg5 13.♘xg5 e6 14.h4 ♗f6 15.f4 ♕d6 16.♕d3 ♔g7 17.♘e4 ♕d8 18.g3 was about equal in Alava-Norri, Helsinki 1990.

4...d5

This is a real shocker that makes for an excellent diagram! More common are 4...d6 and 4...e5.

5.♘f3

White sort of ignores Black's audacious central thrust and simply continues with his development. This is hardly the critical line though.

● Black is also fine after **5.♕d2** ♘f6!, for example: 6.e5 ♘g4 7.♗f4 f6! 8.e6 g5! 9.♘b5 gxf4 10.♕xf4 ♘ge5 11.dxe5 0-0 12.exf6 ♖xf6 13.♕xc7 ♖xe6+ 14.♗e2 ♕f8! 15.0-0-0?? ♗e5 0-1, Latorre-Fernandez, Spain 2006.

● After **5.♗b5** Popchev once played 5...♘f6?!, but 6.e5 ♘g4 7.♗f4 h5 8.♘f3 ♘h6 9.h3! a6 10.♗xc6+ bxc6 11.♘a4 ♖b8 12.b3 ♗f5 13.♘c5 ♕c8 14.♕e2 was excellent for White in Panajotov-Popchev, Plovdiv 2006. Stronger are both 5...e6 6.♕d2 ♘e7 7.♘f3 h6 8.0-0-0 a6 9.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 10.♖he1 ♘e7 11.♗f4 b5 with counterplay in Carruez-Fernandez, Aragon 1994. And 5...dxe4!? 6.d5 a6 7.♗a4 (7.dxc6 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♕xd1+ 9.♖xd1 axb5∓) 7...♗xc3+!? 8.bxc3 b5 9.♗b3 (9.dxc6 ♕xd1+ 10.♖xd1 bxa4∓) 9...♘a5 10.♕d4? ♘f6 11.♗h6 ♘xb3 12.axb3 ♕xd5 13.♗g7 ♕xd4 14.cxd4 ♖g8 15.♗xf6 exf6 and with two pawns up Black was winning in Brinck Claussen-J.Pedersen, Denmark 1994/95.

● If White takes with the knight then **5.♘xd5** e6 6.♘c3 ♘xd4 retrieving the pawn is the idea. After 7.♕d2 Black still has certain problems to solve (which should be possible with careful play): 7...c5 (7...e5 8.♘ge2; 7...♘e7 8.0-0-0 e5 9.♘ge2 ♘xe2+? –9...c5! – 10.♕xe2; 7...♘c6 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 9.0-0-0+ ♗d7 10.♘f3 h6 11.♗b5 ♘ge7 12.♖d2 ♔c8 13.♖hd1 favours White, Gomez-Fernandez, Aragon 2007) 8.0-0-0 ♗d7 9.♘ge2 e5 10.♘d5 ♗c6 (10...♘f6!) 11.c3 ♗xd5 (11...♘e6!) 12.exd5 ♘f5 13.♗xc5±, Socko-Fries Nielsen, Hamburg 1996.

● **5.exd5** is of course the acid test, 5...♘b4

6.♗b5+ (Black will get back his pawn after 6.♗c4 ♘f6 7.♘f3 0-0 8.0-0 ♗f5 9.♗b3 ♘bxd5 10.♘xd5 ♘xd5 11.♗g5±, Morris-Christiansen, Philadelphia 1989, or 7...♘bxd5 8.♘xd5 ♘xd5 9.♗g5 ♕d6 10.0-0 ♗e6 11.♗b3 0-0 12.♕d2 c6 13.♖fe1±, Neelotpal-Popchev, Marianske Lazne 2006) 6...♗d7 7.♗c4 (the intermediate check has made it as least a bit more difficult for Black to retrieve his pawn. Things are easy for Black after 7.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8.a3 ♘xd5 9.♘xd5 ♕xd5 10.♘f3 ♘f6 11.h3 0-0 12.0-0 b5 13.♗f4 c5 14.dxc5 ♕xc5 15.♗e5 a5 ½-½, Sandler-Fries Nielsen, Lyngby 1990) 7...♗f5

– 8.♗b3 ♘f6 9.♕e2 (9.♘ge2 ♘bxd5 10.♘xd5 ♘xd5 11.♘g3 and now rather than 11...c5?! 12.♘xf5 gxf5 13.♕f3 ♘xe3 14.fxe3 0-0 15.0-0-0, Nicevski-Kurajica, Zagreb 1970, Black should play 11...♗e6) 9...0-0 10.♘f3 ♘bxd5 11.♘xd5 ♘xd5 12.0-0 was about equal in Scarzello-Ruiz, Buenos Aires 2008.

– 8.♗b5+ This is obviously not critical as 8...♗d7 repeats moves. However the brave of heart will play 8...♔f8!? 9.♗a4 ♘xd5 (9...♘f6 10.♘f3 ♘bxd5 11.♘xd5 ♘xd5 12.♗d2 c6 13.0-0 h6 14.♖e1 ♗f6 15.c3 ♔g7 16.♘e5 h5 17.♗b3 e6 18.h3 planning g4 18...h4 19.♘g4 ♗xg4 20.♕xg4 ♖h5 and while White is a little better here it was Black who won after a long game Filev-Popchev, Plovdiv 2007) 10.♘ge2 ♘gf6 11.0-0 h5 12.♗b3 c6 13.♘xd5 cxd5 14.f3 ♖c8 15.♘f4 ♔g8 16.♘d3 ♗xd3 17.♕xd3 ♗h6 18.♗xh6 ♖xh6 19.♖fe1 e6 Black has a nice structure and won after a long game in De la Villa Garcia-Christiansen, New York 1989.

– 8.♖c1 ♘f6 9.♗b5+ ♗d7 10.♗c4 ♗g4 11.f3 ♗f5 12.♗b5+ and now again, rather than repeating moves with 12...♗d7 13.♗c4, Black could try 12...♔f8!?.

● White can win space with **5.e5** but Black is fine after 5...f6 (or 5...♘h6 6.f4 ♘g4 7.♕d2 ♗f5 8.♗d3 ♗xd3 9.cxd3 f6 10.♘f3 fxe5 11.fxe5 ♘xe3 12.♕xe3 e6, Vokarev-Pedersen, Pardubice 1997) 6.f4 (6.exf6 ♘xf6 is more than fine for Black) 6...♘h6

This position is quite satisfactory for Black: 7.♗e2 0-0 8.♗f3 (8.♕d2 fxe5 9.fxe5 ♘f5 10.♘f3 – 10.♗f2 ♗h6 – 10...♘xe3 11.♕xe3 ♗f5, Cid-Fernandez, Aragon 1992) 8...e6 9.♘ge2 (9.♕d2 ♘a5!? – 9...♘f5 – 10.b3 c5! 11.♘a4 cxd4 12.♗xd4 ♘c6 13.exf6 ♗xf6 favours Black, Marsal-Fernandez, Vilanova 1994) 9...♘f5 10.♗c1 (10.♗f2 fxe5 11.fxe5 ♘h4, and 11.dxe5 g5 or 11...♘h4) 10...fxe5 11.dxe5 (11.fxe5 ♘fxd4! 12.♘xd4 ♕h4+−+) 11...g5! 12.fxg5 ♘xe5 13.0-0 c6 with an excellent game, Garcia-Fernandez, Cala Galdana 1994.

Let us return to the game after 5.♘f3.

5...dxe4

Here 5...♘f6 is advantageously met by 6.e5 (6.exd5 ♘xd5 or 6...♘b4; 6.♗d3 dxe4 7.♘xe4 ♘b4) 6...♘g4 7.♗f4 f6 8.h3.

6.♘xe4 ♘h6?!

This is the most ambitious move, but it is very risky considering the vulnerable position of both knights after White's next two moves. Safer was 6...♘f6 and after 7.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 followed by castling Black has no specific problems and appears to have equalized.

7.d5! ♘b4 8.♕d2!

Play has become very concrete now.

8...a5

Covering the b4-knight, as the h6-knight is sort of protected by a counter threat on c2.

9.a3

This appears to win, but Black has a strong retort. After 9.♗xh6 ♗xh6 10.♕xh6 ♘xc2+ 11.♔d2

we reach a sharp position. After some time your engine will discover that 11...♘xa1 12.♗c4! favours White. Likewise, Golubev has indicated 11...♗f5 12.♗c4! ♗xe4 13.♕g7 ♖f8 14.♘g5, which is much better for White as 14...♗xd5 15.♔xc2! ♗xc4? fails to 16.♖ad1 when ♘xh7 is an unstoppable threat.

Therefore 11...♕xd5+ 12.♔xc2 ♗f5 appears to be forced when Black is two pawns down for two pieces, but he will retrieve one piece, while White's king is rather airy.

Bad now is 13.♗d3? ♗xe4 14.♗xe4 ♕xe4+ 15.♔c1 ♖a6. And 13.♕e3 ♗xe4+ 14.♔c3 ♗xf3 (Black should take, as 14...0-0-0 15.♗c4 ♕c6 16.♖ad1 b5? fails to 17.♘e5) 15.gxf3 ♕c6+ or 15...0-0 gives Black a lot of play.

Best is 13.♘d2! when 13...♗xe4+ 14.♘xe4 ♕xe4+ 15.♗d3 ♕c6+ 16.♔d2 ♕xg2 17.♕e3 0-0-0 18.♖ad1 gives Black three pawns for the piece – but White is a bit better I would say.

According to Golubev less clear is 9.0-0-0 ♘g4 10.a3 (or 10.♗b5+).

9...♕xd5!

This counter-attack saves the day.

10.axb4

Of course 10.0-0-0 fails to 10...♗xb2+! 11.♔xb2 ♕a2+ 12.♔c3 ♕xa3+ and Black wins.

10...♕xe4 11.♗d3 ♕e6 12.0-0-0?

White is deluded by a nice tactical trick. It was necessary to play 12.0-0 when 12...♘f5 13.♗xf5 ♕xf5 is about equal according to Golubev.

12...0-0!

White was hoping for something like 12...axb4? 13.♗b5+.

However, Black willingly sacrifices his knight for a strong attack.

13.♗xh6

By now White may have realized what he was in for, but it is too late for 13.bxa5, since 13...♕a2 13...♘f5 and 13...♘g4 all favour Black, who has a free attack and a huge positional advantage.

13...axb4!

White escapes into an ending after 13...♕a2 14.♕f4! ♕xb2+ 15.♔d2 ♕xb4+ 16.♔e2 (but not 16.♕xb4?? ♗xh6+).

14.♕e3

Black to play and win is what your book of combinations would say:

14...♗c3!

Cutting off the escape of White's king who now appears to be doomed.

15.bxc3 bxc3

White plays the only defence: **16.♗a6! ♕xe3+!** Not 16...♖xa6? 17.♕xc3! and White wins.

17.♗xe3?!

White hopes to somehow take the c3-pawn after a subsequent ♗e3-d4, but meanwhile it was necessary to keep the f8-rook under attack with 17.fxe3, after 17...♖xa6 18.♔b1 Black must now spent a tempo on 18...♖e8! (18...♖b6+ 19.♔c1 ♗e6 20.♗xf8 ♗a2 21.♘d2! cxd2+ 22.♔xd2 ♔xf8 is somewhat better for Black. He has two pawns for the exchange. Still, a draw is the most likely outcome).

White still has no satisfactory defence. Black already has three pawns for the piece, and pawn c3 is a nail in White's coffin. A nail that is hard to remove as the following lines demonstrate:

– 19.♖d5 ♗d7! 20.♘d4 ♖ea8 21.♘b3 ♗e6 22.♖hd1 ♗xd5 23.♖xd5 ♖d6–+, Golubev.
– 19.♘d4 ♗e6 20.♘b3 (20.♘xe6 ♖xe6 21.♖d3 ♖b6+ 22.♔c1 ♖a6) 20...♖ea8 planning ...c5-c4.
– 19.♖d3 ♗f5 20.♖xc3 ♖ea8 21.♖e1 to place the rook on a protected square: 21...♖a1+ 22.♔b2 ♖8a2+ 23.♔b3 ♗e6+ 24.♔b4 ♖a4+ 25.♔c5 ♖a5+ 26.♔d4 ♖d5+ 27.♔e4 ♖a4+ 28.♘d4 c5 29.♖d1 and Black will end up with two extra pawns. A long and forced line that your engine will reproduce.
17...♖xa6 18.♔b1 ♗h3!

Popchev continues in the same spectacular fashion! Meanwhile 18...♗f5 19.♗d4 ♖a3 was good enough as well (Golubev).
19.♘d4 Black also wins after 19.gxh3 ♖fa8 20.♖d8+ ♖xd8 21.♗d4 (21.♘d4 c5 22.♘b3 c4) 21...♖a3–+. **19...♖b6+ 20.♘b3** Or 20.♔c1 ♖a8 and wins.

20...♖xb3+! Wow, what a game! **21.cxb3 ♗f5+ 22.♔c1 ♖a8** and White resigned. The only defence is 23.♖d8+ ♖xd8 but on the next move Black plays his rook to a8 again with the same threat of mate.

CHAPTER 14

David Navara

Tricky Line vs the Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3

The Slav Defence is very popular nowadays. Many top players including the present World Champion show how difficult it is for White to achieve something tangible even in the most topical lines. Besides, not everybody is ready to sacrifice a pawn after 5.♗g5.

My pet line with 5.♕d3!? is objectively no better of course, but some accuracy is required and the resulting positions are not so widely known. These positions are often sharp and offer a lot of scope for further play. I managed to show in several games that one can successfully play this line even without a deeper knowledge of the theory which I am trying to convey in this article. I usually achieved promising positions, and my opening play in the remaining games could have been improved.

With 5.♕d3 White defends the c4-pawn and wants to play c2-c4 in one go. After this encouraging introduction I should warn you that this sideline can transpose into several others. When quoting the games, I mostly ignore the fact that the discussed position resulted from a different move order. Please do not feel puzzled by the fact that almost none of the quoted games started with 5.♕d3 and that the discussed position sometimes in fact appeared one move later (as in case of 5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♕c2 ♗d6 7.e4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♘xe4 9.♕xe4 ♗b4+).

If you want to play this system, you have to be at least partially acquainted with the con-

tinuation 5...dxc4 6.♕xc4 b5 (a brief look at my games raises some unpleasant questions in this respect). I decided to focus entirely on White's plans with e2-e4.

After 5...♘bd7 White can also continue with moves like 6.♗g5 and 7.e3, or 6.g3 and 7.♗g2, but here too I restrict myself to 6.e4 and ignored these lines, because the poor position of White's queen should allow Black to equalize.

I believe that this line can be very dangerous for a surprised opponent, and not just in rapid and blitz events.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3!?

Black has many possible reactions to 5.♕d3. Variation A covers the less popular continuations – with 5...b6 as the main line. Another unusual reaction is 5...♗e7 (B) – the selected games are quite interesting.

The most common replies are 5...dxc4 (C), and 5...♘bd7 (D) – note that they can both transpose into another.

Variation A – The sidelines without 5...♗e7

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3 b6!?

Black intends to play ...♗a6 and White should react aggressively if he wants to fight for an opening advantage.

● The move 5...♗b4 does not match with c7-c6 very well: 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.♕xc3 resembles the Nimzo-Indian Defence, the bishop pair gives White easier play.

● 5...♘a6 does not solve all the problems, because of 6.a3 (I used to think that White could ignore Black's threat and continue 6.e4, but Black gets a fine Bogo-Indian position after 6...♘b4 7.♕b1 dxe4! 8.♘xe4 ♘xe4 9.♕xe4 c5 10.a3 f5! 11.♕e2 ♕a5!) 6...c5 (6...♗e7 7.e4 dxe4 – 7...0-0 8.e5 dxc4 9.♕c2 ♘d5 10.♗xc4; 7...c5 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.c5 – 8.♘xe4 0-0 9.♗e2 c5 10.0-0 cxd4 11.b4!±) happened in Romanishin-Ljubojevic, Groningen 1993. I can recommend 7.cxd5:

– 7...♘xd5 8.e4 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 cxd4 10.cxd4, when Black's knight is a bit misplaced.

– 7...exd5 8.♗g5.

– 7...cxd4!? 8.♕xd4 ♗c5 (8...exd5 9.♗g5±) 9.♕h4 exd5 10.♗g5 ♗e7.

● The game Miles-Lombard, Biel 1977, saw 5...c5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 (6...exd5 7.♗g5) 7.♘xd5 exd5 (7...♕xd5 8.e4±) 8.g3 c4 9.♕c2 ♘c6. Black has equalized but White converted his 'advantage of a stronger player' later on.

I prefer 6.♗g5, for example:

– 6...dxc4 7.♕xc4;

– 6...♘c6 7.0-0-0!? ♘b4 8.♕d2 dxc4 9.e4± and Black is dangerously underdeveloped.

– 6...cxd4 7.♘xd4 (7.♕xd4 ♘c6 8.♗xf6 transposes to the brilliant game

Pillsbury-Lasker, Cambridge Springs 1904. White won, but Black's position should not be bad) 7...e5 (7...♗b4!? – White cannot give a check on a4 – 8.cxd5 ♕xd5 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.0-0-0±; 7...dxc4 8.♕xc4) 8.♘db5. This reminds me of the game Fine-Yudovich, Moscow 1936, which saw 2...e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 c5 5.♗g5 cxd4 6.♘xd4 e5 7.♘db5 – White's queen remained on d1, otherwise the position is the same – and Black won after 7...a6! 8.♘xd5 axb5 9.♘xf6+ ♕xf6!! 10.♗xf6 ♗b4+. Needless to say, with the queen on d3 this makes no sense and Black should play 8...d4 9.♘d5 ♘a6 and is only very slightly worse.

● 5...a6 6.e4 b5 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.e5 looks like a French Defence with 3.e5. The position of White's queen fails to impress, but on the other hand White managed to develop a knight on c3, which is not common in the French Defence.

6.e4 ♗a6

Alternatively, 6...dxc4 7.♕xc4 ♗a6 8.♕b3 ♗xf1 9.♔xf1 followed by g3, ♔g2 or 9.♖xf1 followed by ♗g5, 0-0-0 both look slightly better for White.

After 6...♗b4 7.e5 dxc4 (7...♘e4 8.♕c2) 8.♕c2! ♘d5 9.♗xc4 ♗a6 10.♗xa6 ♘xa6 it is an open question which minor piece belongs on g5, perhaps 11.0-0± could postpone the decision.

White is at a crossroads now.

7.♕c2

Note that 7.b3?! ♗b4 is very good for Black, while 7.♘e5?! dxc4! 8.♘xc4? b5 even loses a piece.

7.exd5!?. This continuation might be more dangerous for Black.

After 7...exd5 8.♗g5 ♗xc4 (8...dxc4 9.♕e3+ ♕e7 10.♘e5) 9.♕e3+ ♕e7 10.♗xc4 ♕xe3+ (or 10...dxc4 11.♘e5 and White regains the pawn under favourable circumstances) 11.fxe3 dxc4 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♘d2 b5 14.a4 ♗b4 15.0-0, Black cannot defend his numerous weaknesses.

Therefore Black should reply 7...cxd5 when after 8.♘e5 we reach the diagrammed position

– 8...♗b4 9.♕f3 0-0 (9...♘bd7?! 10.cxd5 ♗xf1 11.dxe6) 10.♗g5 dxc4!? 11.0-0-0! ♗xc3 12.♕xa8 ♗xd4 13.♕f3, White is better thanks to the numerous pins.

– 8...♘bd7 9.♗g5 might transpose to 8...dxc4.

– 8...dxc4 9.♕f3 ♕xd4 (9...♘bd7 10.♗g5 ♖c8 11.♘xd7 ♕xd7 12.♗xf6 ♗b7!? 13.d5 gxf6 14.0-0-0 ♕e7 looks good for Black who threatens to consolidate after ...♗g7, ...0-0, but 11.0-0-0!? deserves serious attention) 10.♘xf7 ♔xf7 11.♕xa8 ♗b4 (11...♗c5?! 12.♗e3 ♕e5 13.♕xa7+ ♔g6 14.0-0-0) 12.♕f3 (12.♕xa7+ ♔g6 13.♗d2 ♖d8 is rather dangerous for White) 12...♘c6

13.♗d2! (13.♗e2? ♘e5 14.♕e3 ♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 ♗xc3+!) and 14.0-0-0. The position is very sharp and approximately equal.

7...dxc4

This position resembles some gambit lines like 5.♕c2. White lost one tempo by moving his queen twice, Black lost one tempo with his b-pawn. The moves ♕c2 and ...♗a6 can be useful in this type of position. White has sufficient compensation, but not more than that. Black should probably first develop his pieces and only then play b6-b5. White can play ♗e2, ♗g5, 0-0 and in some lines with b6-b5 also b2-b3, the position promises both sides mutual chances.

● 7...♗xc4 8.♗xc4 dxc4 9.♗g5 ♗e7 (9...h6!?) and now:

– 10.0-0 0-0 (10...b5 11.a4 ♕b6 looks dangerous for Black) 11.a4 and White recaptures the c4-pawn and has a slight edge.

– White can also insert 10.a4!?, for example 10...♘a6 (10...0-0 11.0-0) 11.♕e2 ♘b4 12.0-0 ♘d3 13.b3.

– 10.0-0-0 might be overly risky in view of the knight manoeuvre ♘b8-a6-b4-d3.

● 7...dxe4!? 8.♘xe4 ♗b4+ (8...♘xe4 9.♕xc4 ♗b4+ 10.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 11.♘xd2±) 9.♘c3!? (9.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10.♘exd2 c5=) 9...c5 10.♗g5!? (the position might be equal, but at least it is sharp enough) 10...cxd4 11.♕a4+.

8.♗g5

White also has compensation after 8.♗e2 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♗f4!? or 10.♗g5 ♘bd7.

8...♗e7

After 8...h6 9.♗h4 b5 I like 10.♗e2 rather than the pseudo-Botvinnik System in the Slav Defence – 10.e5 g5 11.♘xg5 hxg5 12.♗xg5 ♘bd7 13.exf6 (13.g3?! c5) 13...♘xf6 14.0-0-0 – but Black seems to be doing fine in both cases.

9.♗e2 b5

9...0-0 10.0-0 ♘bd7 is a safer move order as Black does not have to worry about the line 11.♕a4 ♗b5! 12.♘xb5 cxb5 13.♕xb5 ♘xe4 with equality.

10.0-0 h6

This is a double-edged move. It forces White's bishop to leave the c1-h6 diagonal, but the weakening of Black's king can sometimes be felt. Simply 10...0-0 was the alternative.

11.♗h4 0-0

12.b3!?

This move is by no means obligatory, but I cannot see how should White play actively otherwise.

12...♘bd7

Play is about equal after 12...b4 13.♘a4 c3 14.♗xa6 ♘xa6 15.a3. White has fine compensation in case of 12...cxb3 13.axb3 ♗b7 14.♗xf6!? ♗xf6 (14...gxf6!?) 15.e5 ♗c7

16.♕e4 – White threatens to take on b5 and at the same time wants to emphasize the drawback of the move h7-h6 by playing ♗d3.

13.bxc4 bxc4

White's strong centre compensates for the missing pawn.

Variation B – 5...♗e7

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■ **Oleg Korneev**
France team championship 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3 ♗e7

This move is rather rare but fairly logical. Black is waiting with the move ....dxc4, exploiting the fact that White usually does not play 8.e4 in case of 5...dxc4 6.♕xc4 b5 7.♕d3 ♗e7. Perhaps I should once more stress that the move 6.e4 is not obligatory here, but the alternatives 6.♗g5, 6.g3 and 6.♗f4 fail to impress me.

6.e4

I even considered 6.g4 0-0 7.g5 dxc4 8.♕xc4 ♘d5 but it looked too obscure to me and not without reason!

6...dxc4 7.♕xc4 b5

I guess that we both were out of our preparation around this moment.

8.♕d3 b4 9.♘a4

The alternatives were not very promising, e.g. 9.e5? bxc3 10.exf6 cxb2 11.fxg7 bxc1♕+ 12.♖xc1 ♖g8 13.♕xh7 ♗b4+ 14.♔d1 ♔e7.

9...0-0

I was more concerned about 9...♕a5 10.b3 ♗a6 11.♕c2 ♗xf1. I planned to recapture with the king, but Black equalizes rather easily after both 12...♕b5+ and 12...0-0 13.g3 (13.♗g5) 13...c5 14.♘xc5 ♖c8. The alternative 12.♖xf1 0-0 13.♗g5 ♘bd7 14.0-0-0 is sharper, but Black should generate sufficient counterplay after something like 14...c5 15.d5 (this is stronger than both 15.dxc5? ♘xc5 followed by 16...♖c8 which is probably bad for White, and 15.e5?! cxd4) and now Black should choose between 15...exd5 16.e5 c4, 15...c4!? and 15...♘b6, with mutual chances in all the lines.

10.♕c2

10.♗g5 deserves some attention, but Black can probably play 10...♕a5 as 11.b3 ♗a6 12.♕c2 ♗xf1 13.♖xf1 (13.♔xf1 ♕b5+!=) 13...♘bd7 transposes to 9...♕a5.

10...♕a5 11.b3

Not 11.♘d2?! ♘xe4!? 12.♘xe4 b3+.

11...♗a6

12.♗xa6

White had many alternatives.

12.♗g5!? ♗xf1 13.♖xf1 deserves attention

(13.♔xf1 ♕b5+ 14.♔g1 ♘bd7 15.e5 – Rybka proposes 15.d5!?, the point is that 15...cxd5 16.e5 loses a piece – 15...♘d5 16.♗xe7 ♘xe7 17.♘g5 (Korneev) leads to a sharp and approximately balanced position). 12.♘e5 is also a serious alternative, White prepares the moves 13.♗xa6 and 13.♗g5 and can also consider playing ♘c4 at times. 12...♗xf1 13.♖xf1 ♘fd7 looks like the critical test.

12...♕xa6?!

Only after I made my move did I start to care about the recapture 12...♘xa6 seriously. I found something like 13.♘e5 c5 14.♘c6 ♕c7 15.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 16.♗g5 (16.dxc5 ♖ac8 17.♗e3 ♘g4; 16.♕c4 (Korneev) 16...♕b7=) but it fails to 16...cxd4! 17.♕c6 (17.e5 ♕b7!) 17...♘c7 18.e5 ♕d7.

13.♗g5 ♘bd7!

This is a principled choice.

Black correctly rejected 13...♖e8 14.♘e5 ♘fd7 15.♗xe7 ♘xe5 16.♘c5 ♕b5 17.♗d6.

14.♘e5

14.0-0-0 c5 is similar to some above-mentioned lines with White's rook on f1 and Black's queen on a5. The position remains sharp and balanced, 15.dxc5 is also possible.

14...♘xe5 15.dxe5 ♘d5

16.exd5

I considered several alternatives including 16.h4?! ♗xg5 17.hxg5 ♘f4 18.0-0-0, but Black is not obliged to take on g2.

More promising was the recommendation of GM Kiril Georgiev, namely 16.♗xe7 ♘xe7 17.♘c5 ♕b5 18.f4! (White relies on his powerful knight. 18.0-0-0? ♘g6) 18...♖fd8 (neither me nor my electronic co-authors can prove White's edge after 18...g5!?, for example 19.fxg5, or 19.g3!? – Kir. Georgiev – 19...♖ad8! and White cannot castle queenside) 19.♔f2 ♖d4 20.♖hd1 ♖ad8 21.♖xd4 ♖xd4 22.♖c1=/±.

16...♗xg5

I naturally wanted to play d5-d6 and to castle somewhere, but currently White cannot castle and 17.d6 allows Black to break White's centre after 17...f6 or 17...♕b5 18.♕e4 f6 19.f4 ♗h6, for example 20.exf6 ♖xf6 21.g3 e5!.

17.h4 17.dxc6 ♖ac8 does not look very good. **17...♗h6**

Otherwise White could castle queenside at some suitable moment. 17...♗f4? 18.♕e4.

18.g4

Black's bishop is in danger, 18...f6? 19.g5 does not solve the problem.

18...♕b5

Taking on d5 does not offer adequate compensation.

My opponent correctly rejected 18...♖ad8 because of 19.g5 ♖xd5 20.f4 ♖fd8 21.gxh6 ♖d3 22.♘c5 ♖e3+ 23.♔f2 (Korneev).

I expected 18...g6. The position is extremely unclear and approximately equal after both 19.d6 and 19.h5.

19.g5 19.♕xc6? ♕d3. **19...♕xd5 20.0-0**

I managed to castle, but the 'preparatory moves' were far from usual. Black could have obtained three pawns for the missing piece, but White would have kept the edge owing to Black's pawn weaknesses. White's king is relatively safe.

20...♕f3?!

20...♗xg5 21.hxg5 ♕xe5 22.♕c5 ♕f4 23.♕e3 is better for White but the presence of queens promises Black some counterplay.

21.♕c4

The threat is ♖a1-e1-e3. 21.♕d1 ♕h3 22.♕d4 f6 23.gxh6 (23.exf6? gxf6 24.gxh6 ♔h8!) 23...fxe5 gives Black decent counterplay.

21...f5?

During the game I was afraid of 21...f6 but my opponent correctly rejected this because of 22.gxh6 gxh6 23.♔h2 ♔h8 24.♖g1!±, for example 24...fxe5 (Black can play better here or on the next move, but still remains with three weak pawns for a knight) 25.♖g2 ♖f4 26.♕xe6 ♖xh4+ 27.♔g1 ♕h5 28.♕f6 mate, Korneev.

21...♖ad8 22.♖ae1 ♖d3 23.♕e4 should also be bad for Black.

21...♗xg5 22.hxg5 ♕f5 23.♕h4 is certainly worse than 20...♗xg5.

22.♖ae1 f4

Being in a time-trouble, my opponent believed that he could force a perpetual. Black loses after 22...♔h8 23.♖e3 ♕h5 24.♕f4!.

23.♕xe6+ ♔h8 24.♔h2!

Black loses a piece and the game.

24.gxh6 ♖ae8 (24...gxh6 25.♔h2) 25.♕d7 (25.hxg7+? ♔xg7 26.♕d7+ ♖f7!) was also sufficient.

24...♕h5 25.gxh6 ♖f5 26.hxg7+ ♔xg7 27.♖g1+ ♔h8 28.♕e7 ♖f7 29.♕g5 ♕f3 30.e6 ♕xf2+ 31.♖g2

Black resigned.

This was the first game in which I tried this system. It is no wonder that I decided to repeat it!

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■ **Vasily Gagarin**
Moscow Open 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♕d3 dxc4

5...♗e7 6.e4 dxc4 transposes to the game.

6.♕xc4 b5 7.♕d3 ♗e7 8.e4

Some other moves like 8.a3 are more common, here.

8...b4 9.♘a4 ♗a6 10.♕c2 ♗xf1

11.♖xf1

11.♔xf1 followed by 12.g3 and 13.♔g2 is presumably too slow on account of 11...♕a5 12.b3 (12.g3 ♘xe4!) 12...♕b5+!, when Black wins a tempo and probably succeeds to execute the liberating break c6-c5.

11...0-0 12.♗e3 12.♗g5!? **12...♘fd7?!** 12...♕a5 13.b3 ♘bd7 14.0-0-0 c5 gives Black decent play. **13.♘c5?!** 13.0-0-0 looks more natural to me, e.g. 13...♕a5 14.♔b1 ♘b6 15.♘c5±. **13...♘xc5 14.dxc5 ♕a5 15.b3?!** Play is unclear after both 15.♘d2 b3 16.♕xb3 ♘a6!? and 15.♕c4!? ♘d7 16.0-0-0 ♘xc5 17.♔b1.

15...♘d7 16.♖c1

The sacrifice 16.0-0-0 looks less appealing than after 15.♕c4.

16...♖ab8?!

Black plans to attack the c5-pawn, but White can sacrifice it. Knowing the further course of the game, it is easy to recommend 16...♖fd8!? (or 16...♖ad8) with the idea 17.♔e2 ♕a6+!?. This would have enabled Black to avoid problems. 18.♕c4 ♕xa2+ 19.♖c2 ♕a5 20.♖d1 with compensation.

17.♔e2! ♕b5+

17...♕a6+ 18.♕d3 ♕xd3+ (18...♕xa2+? 19.♖c2; 18...♕b7 19.♖fd1 ♖fd8 20.♕c4) 19.♔xd3 and White is better – Black's queenside pawns might become weak.

17...♖b5 18.♖fd1 ♘xc5 19.♘d4 ♖b6 gives White strong pressure in return for the pawn. The calm 17...♖fd8 deserves attention.

18.♕c4 ♗xc5

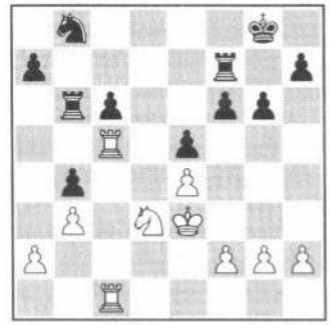
18...♘xc5? 19.♕xb5 ♖xb5 20.♘d4 ♘xe4 (20...♖a5 21.♘xc6 ♖xa2+ 22.♔f3 loses a piece) 21.♘xb5 cxb5 22.♖c7±.

19.♕xb5 ♖xb5 20.♖fd1! ♗xe3 21.♔xe3 ♘b8

Otherwise White recaptures on c6 with a serious advantage owing to the control of the open lines. White has more than sufficient compensation thanks to numerous weaknesses in Black's camp.

21...♘e5 22.♘xe5 (22.♘d4 ♖a5) 22...♖xe5 23.♖xc6 and Black has to be very careful.

22.♖d2 e5 22...♖c8 23.♘d4 ♖b6 (23...♖a5 24.♘xc6 ♘xc6 25.♖xc6). **23.♘e1! g6** I do not quite understand this move. Did Black want to prepare f7-f5? Better are 23...f6 and 23...♖c8. **24.♖dc2 f6** 24...f5 25.♘d3. **25.♖c5 ♖b6 26.♘d3 ♖f7** The computer's proposal 26...♖c8 followed by ...♘d7 or ...♘a6 looks more reasonable, still Black has to be careful.



27.h4!

White prepares the advance f2-f4, but after g2-g3 Black could diminish its effect by playing g6-g5.

27...h5

27...h6!? 28.♖1c4 ♖fb7 29.g3 g5 30.f4!? exf4+ 31.gxf4 is also more pleasant for White.

28.♖1c4 ♖fb7 29.f3 29.g3 was also possible, but White does not have to hurry.

29...♔f8 30.g3 ♔e8 31.f4 exf4+ 32.gxf4 ♔d8?! The king should not have left the kingside. **33.f5! ♘d7 34.fxg6! ♘xc5 35.♘xc5 ♖e7** 35...♔c7 36.♘xb7

♖xb7 37.♖xc6+–. **36.g7 ♖e8** 36...♖xg7? 37.♘e6+ **37.♖d4+ ♔c8** 37...♔e7 38.♖d7 is a nice mate. **38.♖d7 ♖b5 39.♖f7 ♖xc5 40.♖f8 ♖c3+ 41.♔f4**
Black resigned. A very nice game!

Variation C – 5...dxc4

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3!? dxc4 6.♕xc4 b5

7.♕d3

As far as I know, the other retreat does not pose Black any problems, for example 7.♕b3 ♘bd7 8.g3 (8.♗g5 h6) 8...♗b7 9.♗g2 a6 10.0-0 c5.

7...♘bd7

In case of 7...♗a6 8.♘e4 White has a slight edge.

A serious alternative is 7...a6 8.e4 c5 9.dxc5:

– Now 9...♕xd3?! 10.♗xd3 ♗xc5 11.c5 is slightly more pleasant for White. For example 11...♘fd7 12.♗e4 ♖a7 13.♗f4± (Atalik). The evaluation probably holds, but Black can try to disrupt White's pawn structure by playing 13...♗b4!? (as played in the blitz game Navara-Schlecht, Germany 2008) White can try 14.♖c1 (I played something much worse instead) 14...♖c7 15.♗d2 ♘c5?! 16.♔e2 (16.♘xb5 ♘d3+) with the threat of 17.♘xb5. White can consider 13.♔e2!? too.

– However, I should admit that I do not see any advantage after 9...♗xc5! as in Khalifman-Stefanova, Drammen 2004.

Now 10.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 is about equal. In the rapid game Navara-Kramnik, Prague 6th match game 2008, there now followed: 11.e5?! – this is consequent but rather risky – 11...♘g4 12.♗g5+ ♔e8 13.0-0-0? (stronger was 13.♘e4 ♗b4+ 14.♔e2!? which is equal) 13...♘d7 14.♘e4 ♗b7 15.♘xc5 ♘xc5 16.♗h4 ♘e4 Black soon won material and later converted his advantage.

Stronger is 10.e5!? ♘d5 (10...♘fd7 11.♗e2 ♗b7 12.0-0. White has easier play, for example 12...0-0? fails to 13.♘g5! g6 14.♕h3 h5 15.♗xh5) 11.♗e2 (White is probably not better here, but it is Black who has to care about equality) 11...♗b7 (11...♘xc3!? 12.♕xc3 ♘d7) 12.0-0 ♘d7 (12...♘xc3 13.♕xc3 ♘d7 might also suffice for equality) 13.♘e4, the position is equal but full of play.

8.e4

8.g3 ♗b7 9.♗g2 a6 10.0-0 c5 11.♗g5 is also an option, even though Black should be able to equalize.

8...b4

Black has a fresh alternative to this move, namely 8...♕a5. In the stem game Eingorn-Feller, Metz 2008, Black comfortably equalized after 9.♗d2 b4 10.e5 (10.♘d1 c5 11.♘e3 cxd4 12.♘c4 ♕c7 13.e5 ♘d5 14.♖c1± would be nice, but 11...♗b7 with the idea of 12.e5 ♘e4 equalizes) 10...bxc3 11.♗xc3 ♕b6 12.exf6 ♘xf6.

9.♘a4 ♕a5

Or 9...♗b7 and now:

– 10.♗e3 ♕a5 11.b3 – see Yakovenko-Karjakin, Sochi 2008.

– 10.e5 gives Black the additional option 10...♘d5 11.♗d2 ♘5b6!?.

– but 10.♗g5!? ♕a5 11.b3 c5 12.♗xf6 gxf6 (12...♘xf6 13.♕b5+±) 13.♗e2 0-0-0 14.0-0 leads to a complex position with mutual chances. The game Kir.Georgiev-Ivanisevic, Zlatibor 2006, continued 14...♔b8 15.d5 (now, as Black 'lost' a tempo with ♔b8, this move is playable) 15...♗d6 (15...♘b6!?) 16.dxe6 ♘b6 17.♘xb6 ♗xh2+? (17...♕xb6!∞) 18.♘xh2 ♖xd3 19.♘c4 ♕d8 20.e7! ♕d4 (20...♕xc7 is also unsatisfactory) 21.♗xd3 ♕xd3 22.♖ad1 ♕xe4 23.♖d8+ ♔c7 24.f3! ♕xc7 25.♖xh8 and White converted his advantage later on.

10.b3 c5 11.e5

For 11.♗e3 see the next game.

11.♗e2 ♗b7 12.e5 ♘e4 happened in the game Malakhov-Grischuk, Candidates Matches Elista 2007.

11...♘d5 12.♗d2 ♗e7

12...♘5b6 leaves White with many interesting options, for example 13.♕b5 ♕xb5 14.♗xb5.

The game Navara-Kasimdzhanov (mentioned below) in fact continued 12...cxd4!? 13.♖c1 (13.♘xd4 ♘xe5 14.♕g3 ♘d7 15.♘c6 ♕c7 16.♕xc7 ♘xc7 looks equal to me but both sides can deviate from this line) 13...♗b7 (13...♗e7 – see 12...♗e7) 14.♘xd4 ♗e7 (14...♘xe5!? looks possible even now).

13.♖c1 cxd4 14.♘xd4

14...♗b7

The complications arising from 14...♘xe5 are probably advantageous for White, for example 15.♕e4! 15...♗d6 (15...♘g6 16.♘c6) 16.f4 ♘d7 (16...♘g4 17.♗b5+ followed by 18.♕e2 is better for White – Zviagintsev) 17.♘c6 ♘5f6 (17...♘7f6 18.♕d4 ♕c7 19.♘xb4±) 18.♕xe6+ fxe6 19.♘xa5.

15.♕g3

It might be better to play 15.♕b5!? (Zviagintsev) 15...♕xb5 16.♗xb5 a6 17.♗c6 ♗xc6 18.♘xc6 f6 19.exf6 gxf6 20.♔e2.

15...0-0 16.♗h6!?

In the game Navara-Kasimdzhanov, Bun-

desliga 2007/08, I tried 16.♗b5 ♖fd8! (16...♘xe5? 17.♕xe5 ♗f6 18.♕e4 ♗xd4 19.♗d3+−) 17.0-0 (17.♗c6 ♗a6!? 18.♗xa8 ♖xa8 and White has problems with his king) 17...♘f8 18.♗c6 ♕a6 19.♗b5 (19.♗xb7 ♕xb7 20.♘c6 ♖dc8=) 19...♕a5 20.♗c6 ♕a6 21.♖c4 ♖ac8 22.♖fc1, but Black has no problems after 22...♘g6, for example 23.♗xb7 ♕xb7 24.♘c6 ♖xc6! 25.♖xc6 ♘df4! 26.♗xf4?! (26.♕f3 ♘xe5; 26.♕e3 ♕b5 27.♖6c4 ♕d5∓) 26...♕xc6!. The game continued with 22...♘b6 and finished with a draw on the 38th move.

16...g6 17.♗b5

The game Kortchnoi-Zviagintsev, Essen 2002, saw 17.♗xf8 ♗xf8 18.♗e2? (18.♗b5!= Zviagintsev) 18...♗h6 19.♖c2 ♘f4 20.0-0 ♗xg2 21.♕xg2!? ♘xg2 22.♘c6 ♘e3!!∓ and Black went on to win.

17...♖fd8

If 17...♖fc8! then 18.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 19.0-0 with equality. Worse is 18.♗xd7?! ♖xc1+ 19.♗xc1 ♕c7.

18.0-0 ♘b8

This is GM Zviagintsev's old recommendation. Black threatens to play 19...♘c7. 18...♖ac8 19.♖xc8 ♗xc8 looks safer for Black. I now propose

19.♗g5!?

when Black's queen might face problems in view of the prospective threat ♖c5.

□ **Dmitry Yakovenko**
■ **Sergey Karjakin**
Sochi 2008

I have made use of the excellent comments to this game by Igor Lysyj in an article on www.chesspro.ru.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♕b3 dxc4 6.♕xc4 b5 7.♕d3 ♘bd7 8.e4 b4 9.♘a4

9...♕a5

9...♗b7 10.♗e3 ♕a5 11.b3 c5 transposes to the same line. Black can, however, postpone the liberating break c6-c5 by playing 11...♗e7!?, as in Aronian-Gurevich, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005, and he seems to be doing fine, for example 12.♖c1 ♖c8 (12...0-0 13.♘d2 e5!?) 13.♘d2 0-0.

10.b3 c5 11.♗e3 ♗b7

11...cxd4 12.♘xd4 ♗b7 (12...a6 13.♖c1 ♗b7 14.f3±) 13.♕b5 ♕xb5 14.♘xb5 ♔d8 15.f3±.

12.♘xc5 ♗xc5

12...♘xc5?! 13.dxc5 forces Black to deal with ♕b5+. Not surprisingly, 13...a6 promises Black no easy life.

13.dxc5 0-0

White gains a slight edge after 13...♘xe4?! 14.♖c1! ♖c8 15.♕b5 ♕xb5 16.♗xb5 ♗c6 17.♗xc6 ♖xc6 18.♖c4 ♘exc5 19.♔e2 ♔e7 20.♖hc1 ♖hc8 21.♖xb4.

14.♕b5 ♕xb5 Not 14...♕c7? 15.♕xb4 ♘xe4 16.♖c1 which is better for White who has the bishop pair. **15.♗xb5 ♗xe4 16.♖c1 ♖fc8** Here 16...♖ac8? 17.c6 ♘b6? fails to 18.♗c5± attacking f8. White is also better after 17...a6 18.♗a4 ♗xf3 19.cxd7 ♖xc1+ 20.♗xc1 ♗xg2 21.♖g1 ♗e4 22.♗b2 ♗g6 23.♗e5. **17.c6 ♘b6 18.♘e5!?** 18.0-0 a6 19.♗c2 ♘bd5 (19...♘fd5) 20.♗d2 ♘c3 21.♗xc3 bxc3 22.♖xc3 with a slight edge owing to the queenside majority. **18...a6**

19.♗e2 19.♗f1 ♘bd5 (19...♘fd5 20.f3 ♘xe3 21.fxe4 ♖c7) 20.♗d2 ♘e7 21.f3 is slightly better for White thanks to his bishop pair: 21...♗xc6 (21...♗d5) 22.♗xb4 ♘fd5±. **19...♘bd5 20.♗d2 ♗xg2 21.♖g1 ♗e4** Play is very unclear. The game ended in a draw on move 57.

Variation D – 5...♘bd7

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3!?

5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♕c2 ♗d6 7.e4 dxe4 8.♘xc4 ♘xe4 9.♕xe4 would almost have transposed to the game, but here White achieves the same position with the bishop still on f8.

5...♘bd7 6.e4 dxe4

6...♗b4 7.c5 ♘e4 8.♗c2 ♘b6 (8...b6 9.♕c2 ♗a6?! 10.cxd5 ♗xe2 11.♔xe2! cxd5 12.♘xe4±) 9.♕c2 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♗e7 11.c5 (11.cxd5!? could promise White a slight edge according to GM Dolmatov) 11...♘d7 12.c4 dxc4 13.♕xc4 (13.♗xc4?! b6 14.cxb6 axb6= Dolmatov) 13...b6 14.cxb6 ♕xb6 (now the other recapture would have been connected with a loss of the c6-pawn) 15.0-0± Makarov-Dreev, Elista 1995 (Dolmatov).

Note that 6...dxc4 7.♕xc4 is not good as Black cannot play 7...b5 now.

7.♘xe4 ♘xe4

7...c5 is a proposal of GM Igor Stohl. I discuss this position via the move order 7...♘xe4 8.♕xe4 ♘f6 (8...♕f6 9.♗g5 ♕g6 10.0-0-0±) 9.♕d3 c5.

8.♕xe4

With the bishop placed on d6, Black has several options including 9...c5, 9...e5, 9...♗b4+ and 9...♘f6. In our position only the latter two make sense.

8...♗b4+

Or 8...♘f6 and now:

– 9.♕d3 c5 (now after 9...♗b4+ 10.♗d2 ♗xd2+ White can recapture with the queen. 11.♕xd2±) 10.♗e3 cxd4 (10...♕a5+ 11.♗d2 ♕b6 was another option. The pawn sacrifice 12.♗e2 looks interesting then, for example 12...cxd4 13.0-0 ♕xb2!? – 13...♗e7 14.♕xd4 ♕xd4 15.♘xd4 0-0 16.♗f4±; 13...♗c5? 14.b4! – 14.♘xd4 and now 14...♗b4!? seems to be critical test) 11.0-0-0 ♗c5 12.♗xd4 (12.♘xd4 0-0 or 12...♘g4 looks good for Black, whose king is placed safer than his counterpart; Fritz favours 12.♘e5!? but 12...♘d7!? 13.♗xd4 ♘xe5 14.♗xe5 ♕xd3 15.♗xd3 f6 should be equal) 12...♗xd4 13.♕xd4 ♕xd4 14.♖xd4

This happened in the 8th rapid match game Navara-Kramnik, Prague 2008. I published this game so many times that it would seem improper to mention it once more. White's pawn structure and slight lead in the development force Black to play a couple of accurate moves to equalize, for example 14...b6 15.♗e2 ♗b7 16.♖hd1 ♔e7 (16...♖c8!?) 17.g4! followed by 18.♘e5 is still not a dead draw.

– 9.♕h4 enables Black to try 9...♗b4+ 10.♗d2 ♕a5 (or even 10...♗xd2+ 11.♘xd2 g5!? as in Matros-Ziegler, Sweden 2000/01).

– Another possibility was 9.♕c2 c5 (by the way, this is another transposition, as the same position can appear after 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♕c2 e6 5.♘bd2 ♘bd7 6.e4 dxe4 7.♘xe4 c5 8.♘xf6+ ♘xf6) 10.♗e3 ♕a5+ 11.♗d2 ♕b6 12.♗c3 cxd4 13.♘xd4 and White could be better.

9.♗d2 ♗xd2+

9...♕a5 is also an option, 10.a3 ♗xd2+ 11.♘xd2 c5! 12.dxc5 ♕xc5 leads to an equal position discussed below. Therefore 10.♗d3 c5 11.0-0-0!? (Plachetka-Diesen, Odzaci 1978) deserves attention.

10.♘xd2 c5! Black threatens ♘f6. Inaccurate is 10...0-0 see Navara-Akopian below.

11.dxc5 ♕a5

Not 11...♘xc5? 12.♕e5. Schneider-Geller, Pardubice 2008 continued 11...♕f6 12.♗e2 ♘xc5 (12...♕xb2!? 13.♖b1 ♕e5) 13.♕e3 b6 14.♗f3 ♗b7 15.0-0-0 ♖d8 (with the threat of ♘d3+) and Black equalized. Frankly speaking, I cannot see any way to White's advantage as 12.0-0-0 ♕xf2 13.c6 bxc6 14.♕xc6 ♖b8 should not worry Black.

12.a3 For 12.♗e2! – see Ubilava-Kobalia.

12...♕xc5

13.b4

I once tried 13.♗d3 but Black could even play 13...♕e5, for example 14.0-0-0 ♘c5! 15.♕f3? (15.♕e2) 15...♘a4! with mate to follow.

Now both **13...♕e7 14.♗d3 a5** (as in Kasimdzhanov-Nakamura, Corsica 2007) and **13...♕c7 14.♗d3 ♘f6 15.♕e2 b6!?** should suffice for equality.

□ **Elizbar Ubilava**
■ **Mikhail Kobalia**
Torrelavega team championship 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c6 4.♕c2 ♘f6 5.♘bd2 ♘bd7 6.e4 ♘xe4 7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.♕xe4 ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10.♘xd2 c5 11.dxc5 ♕a5

12.♗e2

After 12.c6?! bxc6 13.♕xc6 ♖b8 White is poorly developed, but 12.0-0-0 might be playable.

12...0-0 13.♕e3

Unlike after 12.♕c3, White managed to lure Black's king away from the centre and queenside.

13...♕xc5

Losing is 13...♘xc5? 14.b4! ♕xb4 15.♖b1 ♕a5 16.♖b5. However, 13...♖d8 looks interesting: 14.0-0-0!? (14.a3 ♕xc5; 14.0-0 ♕xc5 – 14...♘xc5 15.♖fd1± with a renewed threat of 16.b4 ♕xb4 17.♖ab1) 14...♘xc5! (14...♕xa2 15.♘e4 or even 15.♘b3 is better for White) 15.♘e4 ♘xe4 16.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 17.♕xe4 ♕c7 and White only has a symbolic advantage.

14.♕xc5 ♘xc5

White managed to lure the black king away from the centre and his queenside majority and better development give him chances to fight for the advantage.

15.b4

Here Rybka's strange suggestion 15.♘b3!? looks worth trying, as 15...♘xb3 16.axb3 weakens the a7 pawn. The reply 16...♗d7 17.♗f3 ♗c6 18.♗xc6 bxc6 19.♔d2! does not solve all the problems.

15...♘a4 16.♖c1 e5

16...a5!? was not bad either, as 17.a3 (17.b5!? might be stronger) 17...axb4 18.axb4 ♘b2 activates Black's rook.

17.c5 ♖d8 18.♘c4 ♖d4?! 18...♗e6!? 19.♘xe5 ♗xa2=. **19.a3± ♗e6?!** 19...f6 20.♘d6 ♗d7?! (20...a5!?) 21.♘xb7 ♗c6 22.♘d6 ♗xg2 23.♖g1 ♗c6 24.♘f5 is bad for Black. **20.♘xe5**

20...♗d5

Now White consolidates, but the alternatives were not appealing, either.

20...♖e4!? 21.♘c4 (21.♘f3 ♘b2) 21...♗xc4 22.♖xc4 ♖e7 23.♖c2 ♖ae8 24.♔d1! ♖xc2

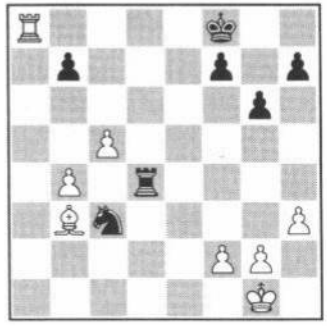
25.♖xe2 ♘c3+ 26.♔d2 and the endgame is grim for Black: 26...♖xe2+ (26...♘xe2 27.♖e1) 27.♔xc3 ♖xf2 28.♖d1±.

21.0-0 a5

21...♖e4 22.♗b5 ♘xc5 23.♖xc5 ♖xe5 leads to an unpleasant pin, 24.♖fc1! (24.♖d1 ♗b3) 24...g6 25.♗c4 wins material.

22.♘c4 22.♖fd1 ♖xd1+ 23.♗xd1± (23.♖xd1? ♘c3). **22...axb4 23.axb4±** Black has no compensation as his knight is misplaced.

23...♗e6 24.♖fe1 ♔f8 25.♗f1 ♖ad8 26.h3 ♗xc4 27.♖xc4 g6 28.♖a1 ♖xc4 29.♗xc4 ♖d4 30.♗b3 ♘c3 31.♖a8+



31...♔g7?!

It is a pity that Black did not play 31...♔e7, as the 'refutation' is very nice: 32.b5!! ♘xb5 (32...♖b4 33.c6 bxc6 34.bxc6 ♔d6 35.♗xf7 should be winning for White) 33.♖h8 ♘c7 (33...♖d7 34.♗a4) 34.♖xb7 ♔d7 – White should win but the game is far from finished.

32.♖b8 ♘e2+ 33.♔h2 ♘c1

After 33...♖xb4 (or 32...♖xb4) 34.c6 ♖xb3 35.c7 ♖c3 36.c8♕ ♖xc8 37.♖xc8 Black loses the b-pawn and consequently the game.

34.♗c2 ♖d7 34...♖xb4 35.c6 ♖c4 36.cxb7 ♖xc2 (36...♖b4 37.♗e4!+–) 37.♖c8+–. **35.♗e4 ♖d4 36.♗f3 ♘d3 37.♖xb7 ♘xb4 38.c6 ♖c4 39.c7**

Black resigned because of 39...♘a6 40.♗e2 ♖xc7 41.♗xa6.

□ **David Navara**
■ **Vladimir Akopian**
Mainz rapid 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♕d3 ♘bd7 6.e4 dxe4 7.♘xe4 ♘xe4 8.♕xe4 ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10.♘xd2 0-0?!

10...♘f6 11.♕h4 g5 might be playable for Black, but White can withdraw his queen to e3, f4 or e5 with a slight edge instead.

11.0-0-0 Weak was 11.♗d3 ♘f6 12.♕h4 e5. **11...c5**

11...♘f6 12.♕h4 ♕a5 13.♗d3! was played several times, 13...♕xa2 (13...♕h5±) 14.g4 is bad for Black.

12.♘f3 cxd4 13.♕xd4 ♕e7 14.♗d3 ♘c5 15.♗c2

This was a rapid game. My opponent had spent approximately around 5 minutes more than me by this moment.

15...b6!

Black wants to fianchetto the bishop. Should he succeed then he has decent chances as White cannot effectively attack on the kingside and the queenside pawn majority can be converted only in the endgame.

16.b4! 16.♕d6 ♕xd6 (16...♕f6? 17.♗xh7+!) 17.♖xd6 ♗b7=. **16...♘b7**

Otherwise the double attack 17.♕e4 would have decided.

17.♕h4!±
But now Black's knight is misplaced.
17...♕xh4 18.♘xh4 a5
Interesting was 18...♘d8, White's pawns could become targets of attack (or defence) and 19.♖d6 ♗b7 is playable.
19.a3 axb4 20.axb4 ♖a1+ 20...♘d8 21.♖d6 ♖a1+ 22.♗b1 loses a pawn now.
21.♔b2 ♖xd1 22.♖xd1 ♖d8

23.♖a1?!
Stronger was 23.♖xd8+ ♘xd8 24.♘f3 (or 24.♗e4 f5!? 25.♗a8±, Konopka) 24...f6 (24...♗b7?! 25.♘e5 ♗xg2 – 25...b5!? is also better for White whose passed pawn becomes dangerous – 26.b5! followed by 27.♘d7) White has some edge but it should not suffice for the win.
23...♘d6
Wrong was 23...♖d4?! 24.♗b3 ♖xh4? 25.♖a8 ♘d6 26.c5+–. **24.c5 bxc5 25.bxc5 ♘b5 26.♘f3 ♗b7 27.♖a5 ♘c7** 27...♗xf3 28.gxf3 should not worry White. **28.♘g5 h6** 28...♗xg2!?=. **29.♘e4 ♖a8** After 29...f5 30.♘d6 ♗xg2 White has a good compensation, but no more. **30.♖xa8+ ♗xa8 31.g3 ♘a6** 31...♗xe4!? 32.♗xe4 ♘a6 33.c6 ♔f8 34.♔c3 ♔e7 35.♔c4 ♔d6 36.♔b5 ♘c7+ 37.♔b6 is a dead draw. **32.♗d3 ♘b4?**
This move caused Black difficulties.
32...♗xe4 33.♗xa6 ♔f8 34.♔c3 ♔e7 should hold.

33.♔c3 ♘xd3
33...♘d5+ 34.♔d4 ♘b4± does not look very inspiring either.
34.♔xd3

Suddenly White is better again, the passed pawn is dangerous and Black would have had to give up a pawn to stop it. Black's moves looked natural.
34...♔f8
34...♗xe4+ 35.♔xe4 ♔f8 36.♔d4 ♔e7 37.♔c4! ♔d7 38.♔b5 ♔c7 39.c6 is probably winning for White, as Black might soon run out of moves. White's king will sooner or later reach b6 or d5.
34...g5 followed by the king's march on g4 and the sacrifice of the bishop for the passed pawn does not look very promising, as Black must also take care about the f7-pawn after 35.♘d6.
35.♘d6 ♔e7 36.♔c4 ♗c6
36...f6 37.♔b5 ♔d7 38.♔b6 is not a draw, for example 38...♗c6 39.♘c8!.
37.♔b4 e5 38.♔a5 ♔e6 39.♔b6 ♗g2 40.♘b5 ♔d7 40...♔f5 41.c6 should be lost. **41.♘a7!** White is winning, he only has to save his kingside pawns. **41...f5 42.c6+ ♗xc6 43.♘xc6 ♔d6 44.♘b4 e4 45.♔b5 ♔e5 46.♔c5 f4 47.♘c6+ ♔f5 48.♔d5 e3 49.f3 fxg3 50.hxg3 h5 51.♘d4+ ♔g5 52.♔e4 h4 53.gxh4+ ♔xh4 54.♘f5+** Black resigned.

CHAPTER 15

Alexander Finkel

Taking Chances in the Volga

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 e6

As you may conclude from the title of this chapter this move is recommended to those of you who are willing to take risks in the opening -and are ready to face the consequences!

If White is careful enough and familiar with the theory, he is expected to emerge out of the opening with a better position. However, the middlegame arising from this line is sufficiently complex leaving Black a decent share of counterplay. Indeed, there are some solid positional grounds for Black's play (control of the centre, a strong bishop on the long diagonal, and often an advantage in development).

I will focus solely on the position arising after 5.♘c3 exd5 6.♘xd5 ♗b7. Of course, White also has 5.dxe6 at his disposal (even though it is quite rarely played compared to 5.♘c3, which is justly considered by modern theory as a more dangerous continuation for Black), but this transposes to the Blumenfeld Gambit (accepted), making it a subject for a different article.

After 6...♗b7 White's most popular reply is 7.♘xf6+, after which White may employ a plan involving a fianchetto development of the king bishop or a plan involving 8.e3 followed by 9.♗e2 or 9.♗d3. In both cases White can fight for an opening advantage. However, the most ambitious alternative is 7.e4!?, which seems to pose Black quite a few problems –

but, I have indicated some improvements for Black in Bischof-Philipowski.

□ **Detlef Bischof**
■ **Robert Philipowski**
Dortmund 2001

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 e6 5.♘c3

As I already mentioned in the introduction, 5.dxe6 leads to a transposition to the Blumenfeld Gambit.

5...exd5 6.♘xd5 ♗b7

7.e4!?

The most challenging move, demanding very precise play from Black.

Note how the natural 7.♗g5? immediately leads to a very difficult position for White after 7...♗xd5 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.♕xd5 ♕xb2 10.♖d1 c4! 11.f4 ♗b4+ 12.♔f2 0-0 13.♕xa8 c3∓, Kluss-Krivoshey, playchess.com 2004.

7...♘xd5

This is definitely Black's best choice, as other continuations lead to nothing but trouble.

● 7...♘xe4?! 8.♗c4. Control over square d5 promises White a very comfortable advantage without any further effort: 8...♗e7 9.♘f3 ♘d6

– In case of 10.♗b3?! Black has enough resources: 10...0-0 11.0-0 c4 12.♗c2 ♘xb5 13.♗f4 ♘a6 14.♘xe7+ (or 14.a4 ♘bc7 15.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 16.♗d6 ♗xf3 with counterplay) 14...♕xe7 15.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 16.♘g5+ ♔g8 17.♕h5 ♗e4 18.♘xe4 ♕xe4 19.♕xb5 ♕xf4 20.♕xa6 d5∓, Skomorokhin-Fedoseev, Nizhny Novgorod 1998.

– However 10.♗e2!? 0-0 11.0-0 ♘e8 12.♗f4 d6 13.a4 with total domination is the problem, Schenk-Schmidt, Oldenburg 2001.

● 7...♗e7 8.♗c4 0-0 9.♘e2 ♘xe4 10.♗f4 ♗d6 11.0-0 ♗xf4 12.♘exf4 is also hardly satisfactory for Black, Goldin-Tate, San Diego 2006.

8.exd5 a6

Another possibility is 8...d6 9.♘e2 ♗e7 10.♘c3 0-0 11.♗e2 ♘d7 12.0-0 ♖e8 13.♗f4 ♘b6 14.♗f3±, Citak-Werner, Budapest 2007.

9.bxa6 ♘xa6 10.♘e2

The knight belongs on c3 to protect pawn d5 and the queenside.

10...♗d6!

This move is more accurate than 10...♗e7 followed by ♗f6, as it's better to reserve the f6-square for the queen.

An attempt to launch a direct assault on the kingside is just insufficient: 10...♕e7?! 11.♗e3 ♕e5 12.♘c3 ♗d6 13.g3 0-0 14.♗g2 f5 15.0-0 f4 16.♗xf4 ♖xf4 17.gxf4 ♕xf4 18.♕h5 and White had a winning position in Delemarre-Boidman, Wiesbaden 2001.

11.♘c3 0-0 12.♗e2 ♘c7

I believe that the knight would be better placed on b4, so I would prefer 12...♗e5!? 13.0-0 ♘b4 14.a4 ♖e8 and White is facing some problems to finish his development.

13.0-0 f5?!

Taking control over e4, but allowing White to regroup his pieces. In dynamic positions with material deficit a waste of a tempo can often mean the difference between getting sufficient counterplay and being on the verge of losing. Better was 13...♗e5.

14.f4?!

Black wasn't really threatening to play ...f4 so the move in the game wasn't really called for. Stronger was 14.a4 ♕h4 15.f4 ♕f6 16.a5±.

14...♕f6 15.♗e3

Completing development can't be wrong, but 15.a4!? is also interesting.

15...♖fe8 16.♕d2 ♖e7 17.♗c4 ♖ae8 18.♗f2 ♗a6 19.♗xa6 ♘xa6 20.♖ae1 ♖xe1 21.♖xe1

Black's pressure over the e-file has been neutralized and White has no serious weaknesses in his camp.

21...♖b8 22.♖c1 Serious attention deserved 22.b3, with the idea not just to stop Black from playing ...c4, but also to bring the knight to c4 via b2. **22...c4 23.♘d1 ♘b4 24.♖xc4** Nothing was promised by 24.a3?! ♘d3 25.♖xc4 ♘xb2 26.♘xb2 ♕xb2 27.♕xb2 ♖xb2 with even chances. **24...♘xa2 25.♗c5 ♗xc5+ 26.♖xc5 h6** I believe Black's chances to hold this position are higher than White's chances to win, but at this point it's hard to believe that White will lose. **27.♖c4** Better was 27.d6! ♘b4 28.♖c7 (28.♘e3 ♘c6 29.b4 ♘xb4 30.♘xf5 ♘c6 31.h3±) 28...♕e6 29.♘e3 ♘a6 30.♖c1±. **27...♕a6!** After White's inaccuracy on the previous move Black has sufficient counterchances. **28.♖d4 ♕b6 29.♔f1 ♘c1! 30.♕c3 ♘b3 31.♖c4** 31.♖d3 ♕b5! intending 32.♔g1? ♘c1!∓. **31...♕b5 32.♔f2 ♕xd5 33.♖c8+?!** Missing a chance to force a draw: 33.♘e3 ♕d2+ 34.♕xd2 ♘xd2 35.♖d4 ♘e4+ 36.♔f1 ♖xb2 37.♘xf5. **33...♖xc8 34.♕xc8+ ♔h7 35.♕c2 ♘c5** The position remains drawish, but due to the weakness of the white king Black is firmly in control. **36.♘c3** 36.g4!?. **36...♕d4+ 37.♔f3 ♘d3 38.♕d2 ♘e5+ 39.♔e2 ♕c4+ 40.♔f2 ♘g4+ 41.♔g3 ♘f6 42.♕e2 ♕b3 43.♔h4** 43.♔f3. **43...♕b4 44.♔g3 g5 45.fxg5 hxg5**

46.♕e5? A blunder which costs White the game. 46.♔f2∓. **46...♕h4+ 47.♔f3 ♕h5+! 48.g4 ♕xg4+ 49.♔f2 ♔g6 50.♘d5? ♘xd5 51.♕xd5 ♕f4+ 52.♔g1 ♕c1+ 53.♔f2 ♕xb2+ 54.♔g1 ♕c1+ 55.♔g2** And White resigned.

□ **Alexander Zajogin**
■ **Yuri Boidman**
Germany Bundesliga B 2002/03

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 e6 5.♘c3 exd5 6.♘xd5 ♗b7 7.♘xf6+

The most popular continuation, which is, however, less challenging for Black than 7.e4.

7...♕xf6 8.♘f3

The following example reveals some of the dangers awaiting White in this variation: 8.e3 a6!? 9.♘f3 ♗d6 10.bxa6 ♘xa6 11.♗c4 (the bishop very rarely feels comfortable on c4 in this line, as ♗xh2 followed by ♕h4+ is always in the air. 11.♗e2 ♘b4 12.a3 ♗e4 13.0-0 ♘c2 and Black can repeat moves) 11...♘b4 12.0-0 0-0 13.a3? ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♗xh2+ 15.♔xh2 ♕h4+ 16.♔g2 ♕xc4 17.♖h1 ♖a6 with an edge, Kavalek-Rutka, Zlin 1958.

8...d5

Barely enough is 8...♗e7 9.e3?! (after 9.g3!? Black would have no choice but to switch to a regular set-up involving ...d5) 9...♕g6!? (temporarily keeping the white king in the centre) 10.♗d2 0-0 11.♗c3 ♗f6 12.♖c1 a6 13.bxa6 ♘xa6 14.a3! ♗xc3+ 15.♖xc3±, Akobian-Sevillano, Stillwater 2007.

9.e3

9...♗d6 10.♗e2

Due to the constant threat of ...d4 the bishop is better placed on e2 in this line, as the white knight deserves some additional protection. In the following game White was tempted by a dubious exchange of two rooks for the black queen, which eventually led to Black's advantage. On a general note, it seems that White's queen has absolutely nothing to do on c2 in this line: 10.♗d3?! 0-0 11.♕c2 h6 12.0-0 ♘d7 13.b3? ♕xa1 14.♗b2 ♕xa2 15.♖a1 ♕xa1+ 16.♗xa1 ♖fe8, M.Ivanov-Boidman, Selestat 2008.

10...0-0 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.a4

Black's chances are illustrated by 12.♕c2?! ♖fe8 13.♖e1?! d4! 14.♗d2 ♗e4 15.♕b3 d3 16.♗xd3 ♗xf3 17.gxf3 ♕xf3∓, as in the game Gnichtel-Boidman, Mehlingen 2000.

12...♖fe8 13.♖b1

The most straightforward approach – White is willing to return a pawn to get a grip on square d4.

A slightly different modification of the same idea occurred in the game Herndl-Trkulja below.

After 13.a5!? ♖ad8

practice saw:

– 14.♕c2?! h6 15.♗d2 d4! (once Black manages to push ...d4, which is a key motif in Black's play in this line, he has very little to worry about!) 16.b4 d3 17.♕xd3 ♘e5 18.♕c2 ♘xf3+ 19.♗xf3 ♗xf3 20.gxf3 ♕g5+ 21.♔h1 ♕h5∓, Ausmins-Capece, Bratto 2001.

– 14.♖a4!? ♗b8?! (14...♘e5!) 15.b4 c4 (15...d4 16.bxc5 d3 17.c6 dxe2 18.♕xe2 ♗xc6 19.bxc6 ♕xc6 20.♖d4 favours White) 16.♘d4?! ♕h6 17.g3 ♘f6 18.♗f3 ♘e4 19.♗xe4 dxe4 with compensation, Herndl-Trkulja, Vienna 1998.

13...♖ad8

Instead 13...♘e5!? 14.♘xe5 ♕xe5 15.f4 ♕f6 16.♗f3 ♕f5 17.♖a1 ♖ad8 18.b3 is slightly better for White.

14.b4! c4

A quite reasonable choice. After 14...cxb4 15.♗b2 ♕g6 16.a5 White is also better.

15.♕d4 ♕g6 16.♗b2 ♗b8 Not 16...♘b6 17.a5 ♖e4 18.♕d2 (18.♕xg7+ ♕xg7 19.♗xg7 ♔xg7 20.axb6 axb6 21.♘d4 ♔f6±) 18...♘d7 19.♗d4 ♗b8 20.h3 with a clear edge. **17.♕h4** White is naturally willing to trade queens. **17...♘f6?** For some reason Black decided to help his opponent to carry out his plan! It was clearly better to play 17...h6!?, keeping the queens on the board. **18.♗xf6 gxf6 19.♘d4 ♖e4 20.♕h5 ♕xh5 21.♗xh5 ♖h4!?** Also after 21...♗xh2+ 22.♔xh2 ♖h4+ 23.♔g3 ♖xh5 24.f4 Black is on the ropes. **22.g4 ♖xh2 23.a5?!** Giving Black a chance to complicate matters. After the cold blooded 23.♘f3! ♖h3 24.♔g2 d4 25.♔xh3 ♗xf3 26.exd4 the game wouldn't have lasted another 50 moves!

23...f5!

Black is back in the game.

24.a6 ♗a8?!

With a bishop on a8 which can't move, Black is virtually playing with a piece down. Correct was 24...fxg4! 25.axb7 ♖xh5 26.♘c6 ♖e8 27.♖a1 ♖h6 28.♖fd1 ♖d6 when both sides have chances.

25.f4 ♖h3 26.♔f2

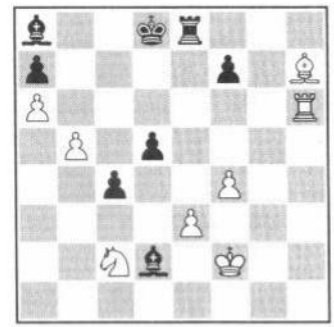
26.♘xf5 d4!? complicates matters.

26...♖e8 27.♖be1 ♗d6 28.♖h1 ♖xh1 29.♖xh1 fxg4 30.♗xg4 ♗xb4 31.♗f5 ♗d2 31...♗c5 32.♗xh7+ ♔f8 33.♗c2 ♔e7.

32.♗xh7+ ♔f8 33.♖h3 ♔e7

Black can be happy with his position, especially if we compare it to the position ten moves ago.

34.♖h6 ♔d8 35.♘c2



35...♖e6? Blundering a pawn – 35...♖h8 was correct. **36.♖xe6 fxe6 37.♗g8 ♔e7 38.♘d4 ♗c3 39.♘xe6 ♔d6 40.♔e2 ♗b2 41.♔d2 d4?** And another blunder decides the issue. 41...♗f6 42.♘d4 ♔c5 43.f5 (43.♔c3 ♗xd4+ 44.exd4+ ♔xb5 45.f5 ♔c6 46.f6 ♔d6=) 43...♔d6 44.♗e6±. **42.♘xd4** The rest is a matter of technique. **42...♔c5 43.f5 ♗e4 44.f6 c3+ 45.♔e2 ♔b6 46.♗b3 ♗a3 47.♗c2 ♗d5 48.♔d3 ♗d6 49.♔xc3** White is now clearly winning and won on move 79 (mating Black's king with bishop and knight).

□ **Michael Hochstrasser**
■ **Hassan Abbasifar**
Golden Sands 2000

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 e6 5.♘c3 exd5 6.♘xd5 ♗b7 7.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 8.♘f3 d5 9.g3!?

Another possible continuation, having its advantages and drawbacks compared to the more popular 9.e3. The main drawback is that in the arising positions Black easily pushes ...d4, obtaining counterplay against e2.

9...♘d7

The immediate 9...♗d6 may just lead to a transposition into the game, however Black may also proceed with 10.♗g2 0-0 11.0-0 a6 12.bxa6 ♖xa6 13.a3 ♖c8 14.♖b1 ♕f5 15.♗d2 ♗c6 16.♖e1±, Stanke-Meyer, Hamburg 2004.

Dubious is 9...♕b6?! 10.a4 (not 10.♗g2 ♕xb5 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♗g5 ♗xg5 13.♘xg5 h6 14.♘h3 d4=, Solomon-Simpson, New York 2001) 10...♗e7 11.♗g2 ♗f6 12.0-0 0-0 13.♖b1 h6 14.b4±, Alatortsev-Ratner, Moscow 1945.

10.♗g2 ♗d6 11.0-0 0-0

12.♕c2

An interesting attempt was made in the following short encounter: 12.♘d2!? (threatening 13.e4 and 13.♘c4) 12...♘b6?! 13.e4 ♗e5 14.exd5 ♗d4 15.♘e4 ♕g6, and a draw was agreed in a position where White's chances are clearly higher, Grandelius-M.Ivanov, Ballerup 2008.

12.♖b1 ♕f5 13.♗d2 a6 14.bxa6 ♗xa6 15.♖e1 ♘f6 16.b4 ♗c4 17.bxc5 ♗xc5 with sufficient compensation, Bozinovic-Trkulja, Pula 1999.

12...♖fe8 13.♖e1

The pawn on e2 is the weakest spot in White's position, so it makes sense to protect it.

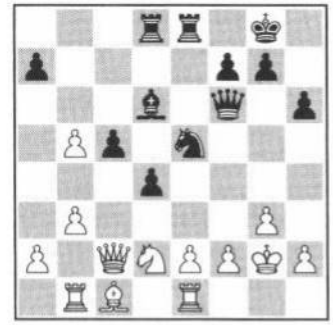
13...h6

Preparing 14...♖ad8.

14.♖b1 ♖ad8 15.b3 d4

Objectively speaking Black hardly has sufficient compensation, but the position is very complex, so White has to watch his steps!

16.♘d2 ♗xg2 17.♔xg2 ♘e5



18.♗b2

Connecting the rooks is probably a good idea. In case of 18.♘c4 Black keeps the balance with 18...d3! 19.♕d2 ♘xc4 20.bxc4 ♕e6 21.♖b3 (21.♕xd3 ♗xg3! 22.♕xg3 ♕e4+ 23.♔f1 ♕xb1 24.♗xh6 ♕h7∓) 21...♗c7 22.♖xd3 ♕xc4. Of interest is 18.♗a3!?.

18...♖e6 19.♖bc1 ♕e7 20.a4 ♖e8 21.♗a3 21.b4!?. **21...♘g4 22.♘c4**

Not 22.h3? ♘xf2! 23.♔xf2 ♖xe2+ 24.♖xe2 ♕xe2+ 25.♔g1 ♕c3+ winning.

22...♗b8 23.♕d3 Or 23.♕d2 ♕f6 24.e3!? but not 24.f3 ♘xh2!. **23...♕g5** Of course Black is not interested in exchanging queens after 23...♖xe2. **24.♘d2 ♘e5 25.♕c2 ♕h5**

26.♕xc5

White should be able to hold after trading his queen for Black's rook and bishop.

However, the right way to treat the position was 26.♗xc5! and the arising complications are to White's advantage. 26...d3! (26...♘g4!? 27.♘f3 ♖c3 28.♗xd4 ♖xf3 29.h3 ♖xf2+ 30.♗xf2 ♘xf2 31.♔xf2 ♕xh3 32.♖g1±) 27.exd3 ♘g4 28.♘f3 (28.♖xe6 ♕xh2+ 29.♔f1 ♖xe6 30.♘e4 f5) 28...♘xh2 29.♕d1 (29.♖xe6 ♕xf3+ 30.♔xh2 ♖xe6∓) 29...♖e2! (29...♘xf3? 30.♖xe6 ♕h2+ 31.♔xf3 ♖xe6 32.♕h1+–) 30.♘d2±.

26...♗d6 27.♕xd6 ♖xd6 28.♗xd6 ♘g4 29.♘f3 ♕d5 29...♘xh2!?. **30.♗c7 ♕xb3 31.h3 ♘f6 32.♘xd4 ♕xa4 33.e3 ♕a2** The position is drawish, but Black has some practical chances. **34.♖c2 ♕a3 35.♖ec1 ♘d5 36.♖c5 ♔h7 37.♖1c2 ♕d3 38.♖c1?** 38.♔h2.

38...♘xe3+! 39.fxe3 ♖xe3 40.♗f4 ♖e4 41.♗e5 ♕d2+ 42.♔h1 ♖xe5

White resigned.

CHAPTER 16

Or Cohen

Petroff for Beginners

Play the Damiano Gambit

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 ♘xe4

Is it really forbidden to copy your opponent? While 3...♘xe4 is certainly risky it is not the typical 'losing' mistake as it is so often presented in lectures for beginners. Reduced to a small note in the ECO, the aim of this article is to shatter the superficial evaluation of the Damiano Gambit. Indeed, with 3...♘xe4 Black sets many pitfalls for White, and if White plays accurately, he gets a slight edge at most, but certainly not a decisive one.

4.♕e2

If White crudely tries to divert the game into familiar territory with 4.d4, then Black has the luxury to choose his preferred version of the Petroff:

– 4...d5 5.♗d3 ♘d7

– 4...d6 5.♘f3 (not 5.♘xf7?? ♕e7!–+ – 5...♔xf7?? 6.♕h5++–) 5...d5 6.♗d3 ♘c6.

4...♕e7 5.♕xe4 d6

Black retrieves the piece and our analysis begins here.

6.d4

In practice, there are nearly no games of importance other than with 6.d4, although especially 6.f4 deserves to be mentioned.

6.♗e2 is a totally harmless move as is shown by 6...♕xe5 7.♕xe5+ (7.♕f3 ♘c6∓) 7...dxe5.

Likewise, 6.♘c3 will not cause Black any sleepless nights: 6...♕xe5 7.♕xe5+ dxe5 8.♗c4 (or 8.♘b5 ♘a6 followed by ...c6) 8...♗c5! (simple and harmonious although 8...♗f5 9.d3 ♘c6 10.♗b5 ♗d7 is also good) 9.d3 0-0 10.0-0 (10.♘b5 ♗b6 11.♗e3 a6 12.♘c3 ♗a5=) 10...♘c6. This short analysis demonstrates that White can create no problems by refusing to accept the gambit.

So, 6.f4 is the only serious try other than 6.d4. After 6...dxe5 White is at crossroads: keeping the queens and the extra pawn or rather trying to drag Black into a seemingly unpleasant endgame.

● 7.♕xe5 ♕xe5+ 8.fxe5 ♘c6

Now 9.♗b5 is White's only way to hold on to his extra pawn. In case of 9.♘c3 Black should not play 9...♘xe5? 10.♘b5! ♗d6 (10...♔d8±) 11.♘xd6+ cxd6 12.d4 with an endgame plus for White, but 9...♗d7!. This is a returning motif in this variation. Black is not in a hurry to get his pawn back, but rather focuses on good piece play. The quiet 9...♗d7 solves Black's development problems, as Black will proceed with 10...♘xe5 on the next move.

So, after 9.♗b5 play may continue 9...♗d7 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 11.0-0 ♗c5+ 12.♔h1 h5!

Owing to this aggressive move and his excellent piece coordination Black has more than enough for the pawn. To continue our analysis:

13.d3 (13.c3 h4 14.h3 ♗b5 15.♖f3 ♗e2 and ...♗d3 with an overwhelming advantage. Who could believe that this could arise from the mundane Petroff?) 13...h4 14.h3 ♖h5!, now the only reasonable move is 15.♘c3! (15.c3 ♖xe5! 16.d4 ♖e2; 15.♖e1 ♖f5 16.♘c3 ♖f2; 15.♗f4 g5 16.♗d2 g4) 15...♗d4!? (Black does not rush to take the pawn back; 15...♖xe5 16.♗f4 ♖e7 17.♗g5±) 16.♗f4 ♔d7!? 17.♖ae1 ♖c8 18.♗h2 f6!? – after the opening of the g-file, Black could harass White thanks to his mighty light-squared bishop. If White would attempt to simplify, Black still has resources thanks to his active rook on h5: 19.exf6 ♖xe1 20.♖xe1 gxf6 21.♗g1 ♗xc3 22.bxc3 ♖a5 with equal chances.

More ambitious is

● 7.fxe5 when Black has the surprising 7...f5!. This is the key move! Theory usually only covers 7...f6.

Now 8.♕e3?! ♘c6 9.♗b5 (9.d4 ♕h4+) 9...♗d7 gives Black good compensation after something like 10.0-0 ♕c5! 11.♕xc5 ♗xc5+ 12.♔h1 0-0-0.

8.♕f4 (This clever move takes in account Black's intention of ...♘c6 and ...♕h4+) 8...g5! there is no return. This Petroff Gambit is designed for the stout-hearted.

– 9.♕g3 f4 10.♕c3 ♘c6 11.d4 ♗g4! 12.♗b5 0-0-0! 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.0-0 (14.♕xc6 ♖xd4∓) 14...c5 with nice play for the pawn.

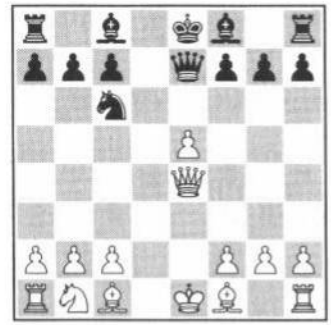
– 9.♕e3. Play is less forcing here which is why this variation cannot be analysed in detail. Nevertheless, whoever intends to play this as Black must be familiar with some of the resources of this position: 9...f4 10.♕c4 ♘c6

11.d4 (11.♗b5 ♗d7 12.d4?! ♘xd4) 11...♗g4 (11...♗e6 12.d5!) is a necessity, and now after 12.c3 (12.♗b5? ♕b4+ 13.♘c3 0-0-0 14.♗xc6 ♖xd4 15.♗xb7+ ♔b8∓) 12...0-0-0 we reach a highly atypical position. Black needs to be very careful, otherwise he could end up in a lost ending. On the other hand, White cannot easily simplify this position, and this fact promises a vivid struggle. The only move now is 13.♗e2 (after 13.♗c4 Black has the amazing 13...♕xe5!! 14.dxe5 ♖d1+ 15.♔f2 ♗c5+—+) 13...♗e6 14.0-0 h5 15.♘d2 ♕d7. Having examined the consequences of 6.f4 in some detail we now return to our introduction after 6.d4.

6...dxe5 7.dxe5

This is the only test of Black's suspicious third move. For details about 7.♕xe5?!, see the game Livshits-Cohen.

7...♘c6



Here starts the real debate of this opening. White has four different moves to choose from.

8.♗b5

This is the main move according to theory. For more details, go over the game Shaw-Volkmann.

For 8.♗f4, see the game Baron-Cohen, while 8.f4 is covered in Grinkevich-Afromeev. Finally, 8.♘c3!? is the most solid and practical continuation for White. See the analysis of the game Nisipeanu-Varga.

□ **Gaby Livshits**
■ **Or Cohen**
Israel League 2006/07 (2)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 ♘xe4 4.♕e2 ♕e7 5.♕xe4 d6 6.d4 dxe5 7.♕xe5 ♕xe5+ 8.dxe5 ♗f5 9.♘c3!

My opponent plays the most accurate move, after which Black is required to play precisely.

● 9.♗d3?! is a very common mistake in blitz games. I have already won dozens of game on ICC after this feeble move.
9...♗xd3 10.cxd3 ♘c6

– 11.♗f4? ♘b4 12.♔d2 0-0-0 13.♗g5 (13.♗g3 h5! 14.h4 ♘xd3 15.♔c2 ♗c5∓) 13...♖d7!∓, Black insists on taking on d3 with the knight!

– 11.f4 ♘b4 12.♘a3 ♘xd3+ 13.♔e2 ♘xc1+! (this is the move to be preferred; I always played 13...0-0-0 in blitz games, until someone found a very accurate continuation as White against me: 14.♘c4 ♘xf4+. I thought that after this move White struggles badly in this endgame, but: 15.♗xf4 ♖d4 16.♖ac1 ♖xf4 17.♖hf1! and White neutralizes Black's advantage) 14.♖axc1 ♗xa3 15.bxa3 0-0-0 with a slight plus.

● 9.c3 is a very materialistic move, 9...♘d7, and now:

– 10.f4 0-0-0 11.♗e3 (11.♘d2 f6 12.exf6 ♖e8+∓) 11...f6 12.♗xa7 (after 12.exf6 ♘xf6 13.♗xa7? ♖e8+ 14.♔f2 b6 15.♗a6+ ♔d7 16.♖d1+ ♔c6 17.b4 ♖a8 18.b5+ ♔c5 19.♘d2 ♖xa7 20.♘b3+ ♔c4 21.♖d4+ ♔xc3 White's attempts are futile and he finds himself simply a piece down) 12...fxe5 13.fxe5 ♘xe5 and due to his advantage in development Black is fine.

– 10.♗f4! 0-0-0 11.♘d2 ♖e8 12.♘c4 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 (13.♗xe5 f6 14.0-0-0 fxe5=) 13...♗d6 14.0-0-0 ♗xe5 with even chances.

● 9.♗b5+ is a subtle move intending to improve on the primitive 9.♗d3. After 9...♘d7! (after 9...c6?! 10.♗d3 Black does not have the convenient ...♘c6) 10.0-0 (10.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 planning ...♗xc2 and ...♖e8) 10...♗xc2 11.♘c3 c6 12.♗c4 ♘b6 13.♗e2 ♗c5 Black stands completely fine.

9...♘d7!

Not 9...♘c6?! 10.♗b5!±.

10.♗f4

Nothing is promised by 10.♗g5 ♗b4 11.0-0-0 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘xe5 13.♗b5+ c6 14.♖he1 f6 15.♗a4 ♔f7. White's bishop pair only compensates for his ruined pawn structure, but nothing more.

After 10.f4 0-0-0 (10...♗xc2?! – Black should not be too keen to retrieve the pawn – 11.♗e3 0-0-0 12.♖c1) White has:

● 11.♗e3 ♗c5 (again not 11...♗xc2? 12.♖c1 ♗f5 13.♘b5)

– 12.♘d5 ♘xe5! (a nice tactical blow; 12...♗xc2 13.♗xc5 ♘xc5 14.♘xc7 ♔xc7 15.♖c1± was White's intention) 13.♗xc5 ♖xd5∓.

– 12.♗xc5 ♘xc5 13.♗c4 (13.♖c1 ♖d4 14.g3 ♖hd8 is fine for Black) 13...♗xc2 14.♗xf7 ♘d3+ 15.♔d2 ♘xe5+ 16.♔xc2 ♘xf7 is equal.

● 11.♗d3. This time, White is much better prepared to play this move (in comparison to 9.♗d3 above). After 11...♗xd3 12.cxd3 ♘c5 13.♔e2 ♘xd3 14.♖d1 ♘xc1+ 15.♖axc1 ♗c5 White has a minimal space advantage,

but nothing which Black cannot handle with some accurate moves.

10...♗c5

10...♗xc2 is again a grave mistake: 11.♖c1 ♗f5 12.♘d5.

11.0-0-0 ♗xf2

Now Black can afford to regain the pawn.

12.♘d5 ♗b6 13.♗c4

White is only a tad better after 13.♘xb6 ♘xb6 14.♗d3 ♗xd3 15.♖xd3 0-0 Gemste-Semaitite, Soviet Union 1979.

13...♗e6 14.♖hf1 ♘f8! 15.a3 ♘g6 16.♗g3 0-0-0 17.h4 c6

17...h5 might have been better.

18.♘xb6+ axb6 19.♗xe6+ fxe6 20.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 21.h5 ♖f8!

This move was missed by my opponent. He thought he was winning after 21.h5. Now after

22.♖d1 ♘f4 23.♗xf4 ♖xf4

The rook ending was drawn on move 37.

□ **Tal Baron**
■ **Or Cohen**
Givataim 2007

This was my first experience with the Damiano Gambit. During a closed tournament for the IM title (in which I had started with ½/2), I decided I had to do something dramatic. I felt sick and tired of entering the Nimzowitsch Attack (1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘f3 ♘xe4 5.♘c3) once more.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 ♘xe4 4.♕e2

Indeed, 4.♘c3?! (White cannot force the Nimzowitsch Attack) 4...♕e7 5.♘xe4 ♕xe5 6.♕e2 ♘c6 is more than fine for Black.

4...♕e7 5.♕xe4 d6 6.d4 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘c6 8.♗f4 g5!

9.♗d2

One of the many pitfalls for White is shown after 9.♗g3??. I won more than a dozen games on ICC against this blunder (this is part of what makes the Damiano Gambit so fun to play). This move looks so natural. White merely wants to protect his pawn and complete his development... but after 9...f5 Black wins a piece! – 10.♕e2 f4 11.♕h5+ ♕f7.

● 9.♗b5 is an attempt to complicate matters, but Black should not get too excited. 9...♗d7 and now:

– 10.♗d2 f5 11.♕e2 a6! (not 11...0-0-0 12.e6! ♕xe6 13.♕xe6 ♗xe6 14.♗xg5) 12.♕h5+ ♕f7 13.♗e2 (13.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 14.♗e2 ♘xe5 15.♗xg5 ♗c6⩱) 13...g4 14.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 15.♗c3 ♗g7 16.f4 gxf3 17.♗xf3 ♔g6!? (17...♗xe5 18.♗xe5 ♘xe5 19.♗xb7 ♖ab8 20.♗d5+) and Black will eventually win the e5-pawn.

– 10.e6 fxe6 (10...♗xe6? 11.♗xc6+ bxc6

12.0-0± – and not 12.♕xc6+?? ♗d7+) 11.♗xc7 ♖c8 12.♗g3 ♕b4+

Remember this move. It's a key move in many variations. 13.♕xb4 ♘xb4 14.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 15.♘a3 ♘xc2+ 16.♘xc2 ♖xc2 is OK for Black.

● Finally, 9.♗e3 ♗g7 10.♗b5 ♗d7 11.♘c3 ♗xe5 with even chances is an old analysis by Pachman.

9...f5!?

Playing against White's active queen. Black is not in a hurry to retrieve the pawn.

10.♕e2

The game is equal after 10.♕e3 f4 11.♕e4 ♗g7 12.♗b5 ♗d7.

10...♖g8!

Both a prophylactic (vs. ♕h5+) and an attacking move.

11.♗c3

Protecting the pawn. 11.♘c3 seems much more natural for White. After 11...♗e6 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 White has

– 13.h4 gxh4 (suddenly the rook on g8 reveals itself and does not look silly at all) 14.f4 ♗h6 15.♕f2 (15.♕h5? ♖xd2 16.♖xd2 ♗xf4∓) 15...♖g4 16.♔b1 (16.♗e2? ♖xd2 17.♖xd2 ♖xf4 planning ...♖d4) 16...♖d4 17.♗e2 ♗xf4 18.♗xg4 ♗g3 19.♕e3 ♖xg4 with unclear play.

– 13.f4 gxf4 14.♗xf4 ♖xd1+ 15.♕xd1 ♗g7, regaining the pawn.

11...♗e6 12.♕h5+?!

12.♕d1 (aimed against ...0-0-0) was more prudent, when Black plays 12...♗d7!.

12...♖g6

White was hoping for 12...♗f7? 13.♕xh7 ♖g6 14.♗d3.

13.♗b5 ♗d5 14.0-0?!

My opponent did not realize the potential danger of kingside castling.

Black has counterplay after 14.♗d3 ♗xg2 15.♖g1 ♗e4. Best looks 14.♘a3 0-0-0 15.0-0-0 ♕e6.

14...0-0-0 15.♗d3 ♕e6

The activity of Black's pieces and the prospects of a kingside attack are far more important than a pawn.

16.♘d2

16.♕xh7?! would give me the chance for a great strike: 16...♗xg2!! 17.♔xg2 ♖xd3 18.cxd3 ♖h6 and white's queen is trapped! White would have two rooks for it, but in such positions (in which one of the kings is not safe) the queen is superior.

16...♗c5 17.♖fe1

White played some natural moves, but they did not hinder Black's attack at all. It was necessary to combat against Black's active pieces much earlier.

No better are 17.♕xh7? ♖f8 (planning ...♖h6) 18.♕h5 ♖h6 19.♕d1 ♖fh8 20.h3 ♖xh3 21.gxh3 ♖xh3 22.♗e4 fxe4 winning,

or 17.♘b3 ♗b6. The best chance was probably 17.♕e2!? g4 18.♔h1 h5.

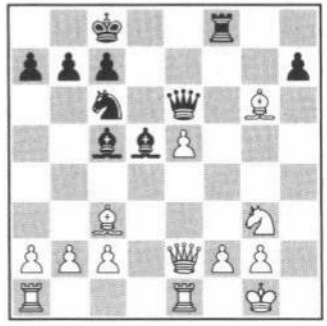
17...♖f8!

This is an important prophylactic move in the attack: preparing the advance of the g-pawn.

18.♕e2

White returns his queen to safety, but this only helps Black to proceed smoothly.

18...g4 19.♘f1 g3! Black has a winning attack. **20.hxg3** Or 20.♘xg3 f4 21.♗xg6 fxg3–+. **20...f4 21.♗xg6 fxg3 22.♘xg3** 22.♗e4 ♗xf2+ 23.♔h1 ♕h6+ 24.♘h2 ♕xh2 mate.



22...♕xg6!

White has simply no defence against all threats and he rightly threw in the towel. Less accurate would have been 22...♖xf2 23.♕xf2 ♗xf2+ 24.♔xf2 ♕xg6.

This game made me fall in love with the Damiano Gambit. Sometimes all we need is a little inspiration...

□ **Sergey Grinkevich**
■ **Vladimir Afromeev**
Tula 2006

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 ♘xe4 4.♕e2 ♕e7 5.♕xe4 d6 6.d4 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘c6 8.f4 ♗g4!

This may look odd, but, in fact, this is Black's only move, as otherwise White's centre crashes Black's hopes. Afromeev is one of the great specialists of the Damiano Gambit.

9.♗d3

Let's analyse the alternatives:

● 9.h3?? (the point behind 8...♗g4 is that the bishop cannot be evicted so easily) 9...♕h4+ 10.♔d2 ♗b4+ 11.c3 0-0-0+ 12.♔c2 ♗d1 mate!

● 9.♗b5? 0-0-0 10.♘c3 (10.0-0 ♕c5+–+; 10.♗xc6 ♖d1+ 11.♔f2 ♖xh1 12.♗xb7+ ♔b8–+) 10...♘d4 11.♗d3 (11.0-0 ♘xb5 12.♘xb5 ♕c5+) 11...♕h4+ 12.g3 (12.♔f1 ♗e7 – intending ...f6 opening the game – 13.♗e3? ♗f5∓) 12...♕h3 13.♗f1 ♕h6 14.♗g2 ♕a6 planning ...♗f5 with a clear plus.

● 9.♗e3 0-0-0 10.♘c3 (10.♗d3 ♘b4) 10...♕b4 11.♕xb4 ♘xb4 12.♖c1 ♗f5 13.♔f2 a6! (13...♘xc2 14.♗xa7) 14.♗c4 ♘xc2 15.♖hd1 ♖xd1 16.♖xd1 ♘xe3 17.♔xe3 ♗c5+ 18.♔f3 h5 19.h3 ♗g6 and White's advantage is not significant at all.

● 9.♘c3 0-0-0 10.♗e2 (10.♗d3 ♘b4 11.0-0 ♘xd3 12.cxd3 f5! 13.exf6 – 13.♕c4 ♕d7 – 13...♕xf6 with compensation) 10...♗xe2 11.♕xe2 (11.♘xc2 ♕b4+! – the move ...♕b4 is a crucial resource in many variations – 12.♘c3 ♕xe4+ 13.♘xe4 ♘d4) 11...♘d4 12.♕e4 f5 13.♕d3 ♕e6 with nice play for the pawn.

9...♕h4+ 10.g3 ♕h3 11.♘c3 0-0-0 12.♗e3

12...♗b4

It seems that White did nothing wrong, but after 12 moves White finds his king in the centre with no opportunity to castle.

Instead of the text 12...f5! was even stronger: 13.exf6 (13.♕a4 ♕g2) 13...gxf6 14.♔f2 ♘b4 with excellent play for the pawn. Clearly, 8.f4 is insufficient after 8...♗g4! I will give the remainder of the game without notes.

13.♔f2 f6 14.♗f1 ♕h5 15.♗e2 ♗xe2 16.♘xe2 fxe5 17.c3 ♗d6

Material is equal, but Black is fully developed which decides the issue.

18.♖ae1 ♖hf8 19.♔g2 ♖de8 20.♕f3 ♕xf3+ 21.♔xf3 exf4 22.gxf4 ♘e5+ 23.♔g3 ♘d3 24.♗d2 g5 25.♘d4 ♗xf4+

White resigned.

□ **Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu**
■ **Zoltan Varga**
Baile Tusnad 2005

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 ♘xe4 4.♕e2 ♕e7 5.♕xe4 d6 6.d4 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘c6 8.♘c3

This solid move might dissuade some adventurers from trying Damiano's Gambit. However, it should be realized that playing like this as White does not fit everybody's style. Many 1.e4 players are not looking for a minimal advantage in a technical game.

8...♕xe5 9.♕xe5+ ♘xe5 10.♗f4

Here 10.♘b5?! is tempting but poses no difficulties for Black after 10...♗b4+ 11.c3 ♗a5 12.♗f4 f6 13.0-0-0 ♗e6 14.♔b1 (14.b4 ♗b6 15.♗e3 ♔e7!? – 15...♖c8 – 16.♗xb6 axb6 17.♘xc7 ♖xa2) 14...0-0 15.♘d4 ♗f7 16.♗e2 ♖ad8 with an even endgame in Shlam-Cohen, Givataim 2008.

10...♗d6?!

After this move White gains an edge which is what most theoretical sources will tell you.

Stronger, in my opinion, is 10...f6!?. After 11.0-0-0 (after 11.♘b5 Black has 11...♗b4+ 12.c3 ♗a5, or 12.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 13.♔xd2 ♔d7 14.♖d1 ♔c6 with equality) 11...a6!?. Black has a suspicious but probably defendable position. With 11...a6 Black prevents White from playing 12.♘b5 and asks the question how could White take advantage of his huge development advantage? 12.♗xe5 (12.♖e1 ♗d6 13.♘e4 ♗e7, and now, unlike in the game, White has no ♗xe5 with ♖d5, winning the pawn under good conditions; 12.♗e2 ♗d6 planning ...♘d3+) 12...fxe5

– 13.♖e1 ♗d6 14.f4 (14.♗c4 ♖f8 15.♖hf1 ♖f4! aimed against f4) 14...♗e6 15.fxe5 ♗c5 This is ending does not look too bad for Black at all. Both bishops play a very important role. It is hard to see how White could win this endgame, considering the fact not even a pair of rooks is yet exchanged.

– 13.♗c4! ♗d6 (13...♗d7 14.♗f7+!) 14.♘c4 ♔e7 15.f4 (15.♖he1 ♖f8! – aimed against 16.f4 – 16.♗d5 ♖b8 equal) 15...♗g4 16.♖de1 ♖hf8 17.fxe5 ♗b4 18.c3 ♗a5 (planning ...♗b6).

In my view, it is very hard to win this endgame as White. White's extra pawn cannot be easily protected in the long run. Note 19.♘c5?! ♗b6 20.♘xb7? ♗c8∓.

11.♗g3!

Now Black has to reckon with White's knight moving to e4 or b5.

11...f6

Vasiukov-Chekhov, Kishinev 1975, saw 11...♗d7 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 13.♘e4 ♗c6 14.♘xd6+ with a pleasant edge.

12.0-0-0 a6 13.♘e4 ♗e7 14.♗xe5 fxe5 15.♖d5!

White has a superior version of my analysis above.

15...♗f6 16.f4 ♗e6 17.♖c5 0-0-0 18.♘xf6 gxf6 19.fxe5 ♗d5 20.exf6 ♖hf8 21.♗d3 ♖xf6 22.♖d1 c6 23.♗xh7 ♗xg2 24.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 25.♖g5

With a sound extra pawn. White went on to win this game.

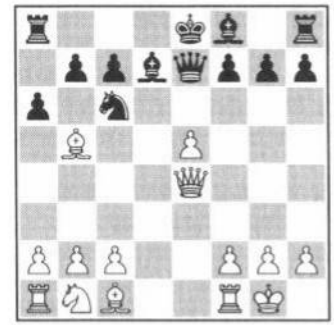
□ **John Shaw**
■ **Friedrich Karl Volkmann**
Plovdiv 2003

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 ♘xe4 4.♕e2 ♕e7 5.♕xe4 d6 6.d4 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘c6 8.♗b5

This move, according to theory, is the refutation of the Damiano Gambit.

8...♗d7 9.♘c3

9.0-0 was tried by the legendary player Ratmir Kholmov. I believe Black should first play 9...a6 and not 9...0-0-0 as is customary played by Black.



● 10:♗d3 0-0-0 11.♖e1 ♖e8:

– 12.♗f4 g5 13.♗g3?? f5 14.exf6 (14.♕f3 f4 15.e6 ♗xe6 16.♗f5 ♘d8) 14...♕f7 and wins.

– 12.f4 f6 13.♘c3 fxe5 14.♘d5 ♕f7 is fine for Black.

● 10.♗c4 0-0-0 11.f4 (if 11.♖e1 then 11...g6, a patient approach intending ...♗f5 and ...♗g7) 11...♘d4! 12.♕xd4 ♗b5 13.♕e4 ♕c5+ 14.♗e3 ♕xc4 15.♕xc4 ♗xc4 16.♖e1 ♗b4 Black's compensation seems to be enough to hold the balance.

● 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6:

– 11.♕f5 (White tries to prevent Black from castling) 11...g6 12.♕h3 ♕xe5! (fearlessly) 13.♗d2 ♕f5 14.♖e1+ ♔d7! is equal.
– 11.♕d4 ♕e6 12.♗f4 (12.♘c3 ♖d8 13.♕h4 ♕g6) 12...♗xg2 13.♔xg2 ♕g4+ with a perpetual.
– 11.♕f4 0-0-0 12.♘c3 f6 13.exf6 gxf6 with compensation.

● 10.♗e2 ♕xe5 11.♕xc5+ ♘xe5 12.♗f4 ♗d6 (White cannot utilize the fact that Black has not castled yet) 13.♘c3 ♗f5 with even chances.

● 10.♗a4 here we see the benefits of 9...a6 – pawn a7 is not hanging after ♗e3. 10...0-0-0 11.f4 (11.♗e3 ♘xe5=; 11.♖e1 ♘xe5 12.♗xd7+ ♖xd7=) 11...f5 12.♕e2 ♘xe5! retrieving the pawn.

9...♕b4!

The key move for the whole variation. Previously only 9...0-0-0 was examined. It was first played in 2001 by the same Volkmann, who is, as you can see, another devotee of the Damiano Gambit. This moves utterly changes the evaluation of the Damiano Gambit. Surprisingly, this move is completely ignored in the books, including Khalifman's great series *Play like Anand*.
Please note that 9...♘xe5? is met by 10.♘d5 ♕d6 11.♗f4.

10.♗c4

This seems to be the best move for White.

● 10.0-0 ♕xe4 11.♘xe4 ♘xe5 12.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 (12...♘xd7? 13.♗f4 0-0-0 14.♘g5+–) 13.♗f4 ♘g6 14.♖ad1+ ♔c6 15.♗e3 ♖e8 is equal.

● 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 11.♕xb4 ♗xb4 12.0-0 0-0-0. In exchange for the sacrificed pawn, Black achieves a remarkable version of the Berlin Wall Defence (the same pawn structure and White is bereft of the light-squared bishop. Black is much more organized in comparision to the genuine Berlin Wall. Of course, Black is a pawn down for all these privileges). It seems to me that White has no winning chances.

● 10.e6 ♕xe4+ 11.♘xe4 ♗xe6 12.♘g5! ♗d5 13.0-0 a6! (13...0-0-0? 14.c4) 14.♖e1+ ♗e7 15.♗xc6+ ♗xc6 16.♗f4 ♖c8 17.♖e3 ♔f8 (play is equal) 18.♘e4 ♗xe4 19.♖xe4 f5 20.♖e3 ♔f7 21.♖ae1 ♖he8 22.♔f1 ♗f6 23.♖xe8 ♖xe8 24.♖xe8 ♔xe8 25.b3 ♔d7 ½-½ Yagupov-Afromeev, Tula 2005.

● 10.♕xb4 ♘xb4 11.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 12.♔d1 ♔e6. This explains the basic idea behind Black's 9...♕b4. Black's king is much more conveniently and actively placed.

● 10.♕f4. This 'computer-like' move has not been tried yet in practice: 10...0-0-0 11.0-0 a6 12.♗d3 (12.♗xc6 ♗xc6 13.♕xf7 ♕g4 14.f3 ♕d4+ 15.♔h1 ♕xe5 16.♗f4 ♕e7 and again it would be highly difficult for White to convert his extra pawn into something tangible) 12...♖e8 13.♕xb4 (13.♖e1 f6 14.♖e4 ♘xe5!! A great resource. 15.♖xb4 ♘xd3 16.♕d2 ♘xb4 17.h3 ♗d6 18.♘e2 ♗c5 19.c3 ♗b5) 13...♘xb4 14.♗f4 ♘xd3 15.cxd3 ♗c5 16.♖fe1 ♗d4 17.♖e4 c5. Maybe Black's compensation for the pawn is not completely sufficient, but can White be completely satisfied of his position (and this after 14 accurate moves in a row after Black's alleged blunder on move three)?

● 10.♗d2 ♕xe4+ 11.♘xe4 ♘xe5 12.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 13.0-0-0 f6! aimed against ♘g5, ½-½, Nedev-Volkmann, Leon 2001.

10...0-0-0

11.a3!

11.0-0 ♘xe5 shows that castling is not always best.

Tishin-Afromeev, Tula 2006, went 11.♗xf7?! ♕xe4+ 12.♘xe4 ♘xe5 13.♗b3 ♗b4+ (13...♗c6 14.f3±) 14.♗d2 (14.c3 ♘d3+ 15.♔e2 ♗b5 16.♗e6+ ♔b8 17.cxb4 ♘xc1+ 18.♔e3 ♘d3∓) 14...♗xd2+ 15.♘xd2 (15.♔xd2? ♗h3+) 15...♖he8 16.0-0?! (16.0-0-0 ♘g4 gives counterplay) 16...♗b5 17.c4 ♗c6 18.♘b1 ♘d3 with a slight edge for Black.

11...♕a5 12.♗xf7

After 12.♗f4 ♗b4 (12...♘xe5? 13.♗xe5 ♖e8 14.f4 f6 15.♗f7 ♖e7 16.b4+−) 13.0-0 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♗e6! 15.♗d3 (15.♖ab1!? ♕xc3 16.♗b5 ♖d5 with counterplay) 15...♕xc3 16.♖ab1 ♗a2! 17.♖bd1 ♔b8 18.♖fe1 h6 19.♗g3 ♖d4 20.♕e2 ♖hd8 Black was somewhat better, Nedev-Volkmann, Istanbul 2003. Possibly 12.0-0! is the best continuation for White. It was never tried in practice yet, but, then again there is virtually no practice yet...! 12...♕xe5 13.♗xf7 ♕xe4 (13...♗d6 14.♕xe5 ♗xe5⩲; 13...♕f6!? if Black would like to speculate a little bit) 14.♘xe4 ♗f5 15.f3 ♘d4 16.c3 ♘e2+ 17.♔h1 ♘xc1 18.♖axc1 ♗e7. This offers White certain winning chances, but still, Black could always try to go into a opposite-coloured bishops which give him decent drawing chances.

12...♘xe5

13.b4!

This intermediate move is best. Black has excellent compensation after 13.♗b3? ♗c6 14.♕f5+ (14.♗d5 ♖xd5 15.b4 ♗xb4) 14...♔b8 15.♕h3 (15.0-0?? ♘f3+) 15...♕a6 or 15...h5 16.0-0 ♗c5.

No better is 13.♗d5?! c6 (13...♘g4!? 14.0-0! ♘f6 15.♕e5 ♔b8 16.b4) and now:

– 14.♗b3? ♘d3+!!. The tactics work after 15.♕xd3 ♗g4 16.♗e6+ ♗xe6 and 15.cxd3 ♖c8.

– 14.0-0 ♗d6 15.♗b3 ♖he8 or 15...♘g4 16.♗f4 ♕c7 17.♗xd6 ♕xd6 18.g3 ♕h6. In positions where Black and White are castled on opposite wings, a pawn is much less significant. The question is who has the better attacking prospects? After 13.b4 we reach an ending by force.

13...♗xb4 14.♕xb4 ♕xb4 15.axb4 ♘xf7 16.♖xa7

16...♔b8!

Volkman deviates from an earlier game of his against Naiditsch.

● 16...♗f5, practice saw:

– 17.♖a2 ♔d7!? (17...♖d4!? Solak-Volkmann, Istanbul 2003) 18.0-0 ♖a8 19.♖d1+ ♘d6 20.♗a3 ♔c8! and Black is OK.

– 17.♖a8+ ♔d7 18.♖a2 ♖a8 19.♖xa8 ♖xa8 20.♔d1 ♘e5 21.♖e1 ♘c6 22.♘d5 ♖a2 23.♘e3 ♗g6 with equal chances.

– However 17.0-0! ♗xc2 18.♗f4! gives White the initiative in this ending. Although there are relatively few pieces left, White can cause Black's king trouble. 18...♖d4 and now rather than 19.♗g3?! as in Zaltz-Cohen, Israel League 2007/08, White should play 19.♗xc7! ♔xc7 20.♘b5+ ♔b6 21.♘xd4 ♔xa7 22.♘xc2±.

● 16...♖he8+ 17.♗e3 ♗f5 18.♖a2 ♖e6 19.♘b5 turned out to be not sufficient for Black (19.0-0! intending 19...♖c6 20.♘b5 ♖xc2 21.♖a8+ ♔d7 22.♖xd8+ ♘xd8 23.♘d4+– was even stronger) 19...♖d5 20.c4 (20.♖a5!?) 20...♖d3 21.♖a8+, Naiditsch-Volkmann, Istanbul 2003.

17.♗e3

Black has compensation after 17.♖a2 ♗c6 intending ...♗c4. Or 17.♖a3 ♖he8+ 18.♗e3 ♗f5 19.0-0 ♗xc2 20.♖fa1 ♔c8 and Black seems to be OK.

17...b6

This is not the best move. 17...♘e5!? is my improvement:

● 18.b5!? b6 (18...♘c4? 19.0-0 ♘xe3? 20.♖fa1+–) 19.♖a4 ♘f7 20.0-0 ♘d6:

– 21.♖fa1 ♗xb5 (21...♘xb5 22.♗f4!! ♘d6 23.♖a8+ ♔b7 24.♖8a7+ ♔c6 25.♗xd6 ♔xd6 26.♖d1+ ♔c6 27.♘d5) 22.♘xb5 ♘xb5, with only a minimal advantage for White.

– 21.♖d4 ♗f5 22.♗g5 ♖d7 (planning ...♖e8, ...♔b7) gradually improving the position.

● 18.0-0 ♘c6 19.♖a4 (19.♖a3 ♘xb4 20.♖fa1 ♘a6 21.♖b1 ♔c8 22.♘d5 ♖de8 23.♗d4 ♗e6 24.♘b4 ♘xb4 25.♖xb4 ♗d5 26.f3 ♖hg8 27.♖a8+ ♔d7 28.♖xe8 ♔xe8 equal) 19...♘d4 20.♖a2 ♗e6 21.♖b2 ♖he8, and White's rook on b2 is not exactly a lovely piece.

18.♖a1?

Shaw should have doubled rooks on the a-file with 18.♖a3! ♗f5 19.0-0 ♗xc2 20.♖fa1.

18...♗f5 19.0-0 ♗xc2 20.♖fc1 ♗d3 21.♗f4 ♖d7

Material is equal and the rest is not interesting for our purposes. The game was drawn on move 44.

CHAPTER 17

Jeroen Bosch

Winning Ugly in the Tarrasch

Gaining time with 6...f6

We reach the diagrammed position after **1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 f6!?**. By the way, I would like to point out that this line has a little brother as well in the form of: 3.♘f3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 f6 – I will not analyse this line in the course of this chapter, though.

With 6.♗g5 White avoids the path recommended by theory: 6.g3 the Rubinstein Variation. Yet, 6.♗g5 can be quite annoying for Black. After 6...♗e7 7.♗xe7 ♘gxe7 8.e3 (8.dxc5 d4!) White tries to claim a slight edge in a relatively simple position. It may not be much, but Black will be reduced for some time to holding the balance. This line was recommended by Emanuel Lasker in the pioneering days of the Tarrasch Defence, and it has to be admitted that it bears some logic.

Black does not have to limit his ambitions to a sterile draw though. There is a way out: and it is the ugly 6...f6!?.This was first played (unsuccessfully) by David Janowski versus Frank Marshall in Paris 1905. Black is winning a tempo, but it comes at a price. He is weakening his kingside, as well as the diagonals a2-g8 and h5-e8, and, what is clearly the most serious drawback to 6...f6, the natural square f6 is no longer available to his knight – which endangers his central control and a speedy development of his kingside.

To understand why I would still recommend

this is as an excellent SOS it is necessary to give a few moves:

– **7.♗f4** The main reply, but now Black unleashes all the latent energy in his Tarrasch set-up with **7...g5!? 8.♗g3** (we will discuss the alternatives later on) **8...g4!** and White loses his d4-pawn by force! Very unclear complications arise after the best moves from both sides now: **9.♘d2! cxd4!** (Janowski played 9...♘xd4 in the aforementioned game) **10.♘b5 ♔f7!**

With clearly a very exciting position!

– **7.♗e3** Quite logically White strengthens square d4 and does not provoke Black into playing ....g5. A disadvantage is that the bishop is obstructing the e-pawn. Black should now transpose into a kind of structure that is known after 6.g3 c4 as the Swedish Variation. In that line ...f6 is not necessarily a drawback. After **7...c4 8.g3 ♗b4 9.♗g2 ♘ge7 10.0-0 0-0** Black really has an acceptable position, where he can play for the win as well.

– **7.♗c1!?** This paradoxical move condemns 6...f6 as a kind of 'original sin'. At the cost of two tempi (but one of them was 6...f6) White is arguing that almost nothing could be more detrimental to Black's position than moving the f-pawn by one square. However, tempi count for something in chess, and it is useful to remember that after **7...♗g4** We have reached a Panov Attack versus the Caro-Kann with colours reversed (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗g5), and the additional ...f6.

By now I hope to have convinced you that 6...f6 does at least deserve some looking into. Let's look at some games!

□ **Milos Kozak**
■ **Krzysztof Zolnierowicz**
Litomerice 1999

1.d4 e6 2.c4 c5 3.♘f3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5
We reach our subject via transposition.
5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 f6 7.♗f4

7...g5!
We will focus on the most aggressive move for Black here. Yet, I would like to point out that 7...♗e6 and 7...c4 are also played (and some strong grandmasters have been involved too):

● **7...♗e6** and now 8.e4!? dxe4 9.d5 exf3 10.♕xf3?! (10.dxe6) 10...♘d4 11.♕e4 ♗d6! 12.♗xd6 ♕xd6 13.dxe6 0-0-0 was more than satisfactory for Black in Bogoljubow-Stoltz, Dortmund 1951.

While, after 8.e3 c4:

– 9.♗e2 ♗b4 10.0-0 a6 11.e4 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘ge7 (12...dxe4 13.♘d2) 13.♘d2 0-0 14.♖e1

b5 has been played a couple of times in practice. Both sides have their chances here.

– Of interest is 9.♗xc4!? dxc4 (9...g5!? 10.♗g3 h5 unclear) 10.d5 ♗xd5 11.♘xd5 ♕a5+ 12.♕d2 0-0-0 13.♕xa5 ♘xa5 14.0-0-0, which favoured White in Pelletier-Fridman, Essen 2000.

● **7...c4** Black immediately sets up the 'Swedish' formation. White should take advantage of the move order (his e-pawn is not restricted here) and play 8.e4! after 8...♗b4 (Harald Keilhack has recommended 8...dxe4 9.♘xe4 ♗f5 in his excellent book on the Tarrasch. It looks very risky, though, among others because of the Fritz-move 9.♘h4!). After 8...♗b4 theory gives:

– 9.♘d2 ♘ge7 (9...dxe4 10.d5 ♗xc3 is another suggestion of Keilhack's, 10.♗xc4! followed by castling refutes Black's play) 10.♘xd5 (10.exd5!? ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♘xd5 12.♕f3± is an old analysis by Max Euwe) 10...♘xd5 11.♕h5+ g6 12.♕xd5 ♕xd5 13.exd5 ♘a5 14.0-0-0 favoured White in Borisenko-Furman, Moscow 1955, although Furman managed to hold onto to the draw in the end.

– However, very strong is 9.exd5! ♕xd5 10.♗e2 ♘ge7 11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 0-0 13.♘d2! b5 14.♗f3 ♕f5 15.♗d6 ♕d7 16.♗xe7 1-0, Bontjer-Möller, Groningen 2004.

8.♗g3

For 8.♗e3 see the next game. Note that 8.♗c1 is ill-timed because of 8...g4!.

8...g4!

Black consistently pushes his g-pawn forward to win the d4-pawn. Arencibia has played 8...♗f5?! here, after 9.e3 (9.dxc5? d4 10.♘a4 ♕a5+ 11.♘d2 b5! 12.cxb6 axb6 13.b3 ♘b4 is excellent for Black (Ftacnik), but on move 13 White should investigate 13.e4! in my opinion) 9...c4 10.♗e2 ♗b4 11.0-0 ♘ge7 12.♘d2 0-0 13.e4 dxe4 14.♗xc4+ ♔g7 15.♘dxe4, Mascarinas-Arencibia, Manila Interzonal 1990, White had a slight but pleasant edge.

9.♘d2

As Keilhack has already demonstrated in *Die Tarrasch-Verteidigung* (1993) 9.♘g1? more or less loses after 9...cxd4 10.♘b1 ♕a5+ 11.♘d2 ♗h6∓ and now 12.a3 ♗f5 13.b4?? is met by 13...♘xb4 14.axb4 ♗xd2+.

9...cxd4!

This is clearly better than the course in the stem game: 9...♘xd4 10.e3 (10.e4!? dxe4 11.♗c4 has been suggested by Ftacnik) 10...♘c6 11.h3!? h5?! 12.hxg4 ♗xg4 13.♕b3 ♘b4 14.♗b5+ ♗d7 15.a3! c4 16.♘xc4!, Marshall-Janowski, Paris 1905.

10.♘b5 ♔f7

A crucial position for the evaluation of 7...g5 8.♗g3 g4. With Black's king on f7 and his

pawns randomly placed across the board it bears resembles to the kind of positions one sometimes finds in the shop windows of non chess playing toy shop owners (albeit that the lower left corner square is dark here!).

Let's try to find some method in the madness, and acknowledge now that White can force a draw by jumping to c7 and back with his knight.

11.♘c7

White plunges in. Practice has also seen:

– 11.e4 dxe4 (why not 11...dxc3?) 12.♗c4+ ♔g7 13.0-0 (13.♘c7 ♖b8 14.♘e6+ ♗xe6 15.♗xe6 ♘h6! is unclear) 13...♘e5 14.♗xg8 ♖xg8 Black can now hide his king on h8. He will probably return both of his (extra!) central pawns for material equality. The rapid game Polak-Orsag, Pribram rapid 1997, ended in a draw after 15.♘xe4 ♗d7?! (15...d3) 16.♘xd4 ♘g6 17.♕b3 ♕b6 18.♕d5 ♖d8 19.♖ad1 ♗e7 20.♕h5 ♔h8 21.♘c3 ♗c8 22.♘db5 ♖xd1 23.♖xd1 a6.

– 11.♕a4 ♗e6 (11...♗b4; 11...d3) 12.♘c7 ♖c8 13.♘xc6 ♔xc6 14.e3 ♗b4 (14...♘b4! favours Black) 15.0-0-0?, Albrecht-Fuchs, Berlin 2007, and now 15...♕a5 would have been strong.

Black is better after the following analysis of Keilhack: 11.e3 ♗f5 12.♘c7 ♘b4! 13.♖c1 (13.e4 ♖c8) 13...d3!? 14.♕b3 ♖c8 15.e4 ♗d6!. Finally, 11.♕b3 deserves attention.

11...♖b8

12.♕b3

Grandmaster Drasko indeed saw nothing better than 12.♘b5 ♖a8 13.♘c7 ♖b8 ½-½, Drasko-Stamenkovic, Niksic 1997.

12...♘e5!?

The textbook example is the old 12...♘ge7 when 13.e4?! (13.♘b5 is better) 13...dxe3 14.fxe3 ♘f5 15.♗f4 (15.♘xd5 ♘e5, and not 15...♗e6 16.♗xb8) 15...♗h6! produces a sharp game that favours Black, Vilerte-Fomina, Riga 1980.

13.♕xd5+ ♕xd5 14.♘xd5 ♗e6

The ending should be OK for Black. His advanced d-pawn is restricting White, and he can easily develop his remaining pieces.

15.♘f4 ♗f5 16.♖c1 ♗d6?!

16...♘e7.

17.♘c4

17.e4 dxe3 18.fxe3 offers equal chances.

17...♗b4+?!

Correct was 17...♘xc4 18.♖xc4 ♗e5.

18.♔d1 ♘e7 19.♘xe5+?!

Returning the favour. White could have taken advantage of the small inaccuracies with 19.♘d3 ♘xd3 20.exd3±.

19...fxe5 20.♘d3 ♗xd3 21.exd3 ♗d6

Play is equal, or perhaps a tad better for Black.

22.h3 h5 23.hxg4 hxg4 24.♖xh8 ♖xh8 25.♗e2

Draw.

□ **Theo van den Tol**
■ **Gösta Stoltz**
Beverwijk 1946

This old game was played in the first 'international' edition of the Hoogovens tournament. The Swede Gösta Stoltz finished as runner-up in this post-war tournament. The laurels for first place went to Belgian count Alberic O'Kelly. Stoltz, by the way, arrived only half an hour before the first game in Beverwijk (close to Wijk aan Zee where the tournament is now held). But let's move on to the game!

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 f6 7.♗f4 g5 8.♗e3 g4

Again this is consistent. However, the fact that White has supported d4 with his last move (and has obstructed his own c-pawn) has led many players to adopt 8...c4 here instead.

● Interesting now is 9.♗d2 ♗e6 (9...♗f5 10.b3!; 9...g4 10.♘g1! f5 11.h3!? – 11.♗f4 – 11...♗g7 – 11...g3 12.fxg3 ♗d6 13.♗f4 ♗xf4 14.gxf4 ♕h4+ 15.♔d2 ♕xf4+ 16.e3± – 12.hxg4 fxg4 13.e4 with an edge for White) 10.e4!? dxe4 11.♕e2 (11.♘xe4 g4! 12.♘g1 ♕xd4∓) 11...exf3 12.♕xe6+ ♕e7 13.♕xe7+ ♘gxe7 and Black is fine in the ending, Berkvens-Bosch, Dutch tt 2008/09.

● 9.g3 ♗h4 10.♗g2 ♘ge7

– 11.0-0 ♗e6 12.♘e1 ♕d7 13.♘c2 ♗a5 14.♗d2 ♗h3 was a pre-war effort by Stoltz. Frydman-Stoltz, Folkestone Olympiad 1933.

– 11.h4! g4 12.♘d2 ♗e6 (12...0-0) 13.0-0 ♕a5 14.♗h6 ♘f5 15.e4!? with crazy complications was Von Herman-Vandrey, Berlin 1993.

9.♘h4

I also like Black after 9.♘g1

and now:

– 9...f5 10.dxc5 (10.♕a4?! c4 11.g3 ♗b4 12.a3 ♗a5 13.♗g2 ♘f6, Tomeo-Koch, Ciudadela 2008) 10...d4 11.♗d2 and now not 11...dxc3? 12.♗xc3 but 11...♘f6!.

– 9...♗g7 10.♕d2 f5 is met by 11.♗g5!.

– 9...♘ge7 10.dxc5 (10.♕d2?! ♘f5 and White cannot avoid material losses: 11.♗f4 cxd4 12.♘b5 ♗b4–+, Ballo-Grafl, Ronneburg 1996) 10...d4 11.♘e4 ♘g6 12.♗d2 f5 and now for either side there is apparently nothing better than 13.♗g5 ♕a5+ (13...♕c7) 14.♗d2 ♕d8 15.♗g5 ♕a5+ 16.♗d2 ♕d8 ½-½, Muse-Michaelsen, Germany Bundesliga 1995/96.

– Finally, I can recommend 9...♘h6! planning ...♘f5, and if 10.♗xh6 ♗xh6 11.e3 then 11...cxd4 12.exd4 0-0 is at least a bit better for Black.

9...f5 10.g3 ♗g7!

Black is building up the pressure against d4 as he has done quite consistently throughout

the game with 3...c5, 5...♘c6 and 8...g4. Because of the fork White must move his bishop and give up the central stronghold.

11.♗f4

Worse is 11.♗d2 cxd4 12.♘a4 ♘f6 13.♘c5 ♘e4 14.♘d3 0-0 15.♘f4 and now 15...♘e5 as in Swiech-Judycki, Slask 1996, was not bad, but 15...♕b6 would have been more or less winning.

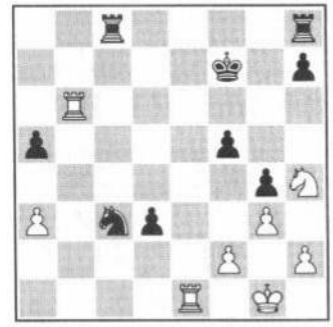
11...cxd4 12.♘b1

12.♘a4 ♘ge7 (12...d3! 13.exd3 – 13.♕xd3 ♕a5+–+; 13.♗g2 dxe2 14.♕xe2+ ♕c7 15.♕xe7+ ♘gxe7 – 13...♘f6 14.♗g2 ♘h5∓) 13.♗g2 0-0?! (13...♕a5+!? 14.♗d2 ♕b5) 14.0-0 b6 15.♕d2 ♗a6 and both sides had their chances in Zhu Chen-Zhukova, Groningen 1999.

12...♘ge7 Or the immediate 12...d3!.

13.♗g2

13...d3! 14.♕d2 dxe2 15.♘c3?! d4?! Better was 15...♕a5 16.♘xe2 ♕xd2+ 17.♗xd2 ♗xb2. **16.♘xe2 ♗e6 17.0-0 ♕a5 18.b4?** Too enthusiastic. White should have played 18.♕xa5 ♘xa5 with decent chances to hold. **18...♕xb4 19.♕xb4 ♘xb4 20.♖ab1 a5** 20...d3!. **21.a3 ♘bd5 22.♖fd1 ♖d8 23.♗g5 ♗c8 24.♖e1 ♔f7 25.♘f4 ♗f6!** By far the best move, now Black is winning. **26.♗xf6 ♔xf6 27.♘xd5+ ♘xd5 28.♖b5! ♘c3?** 28...♗e6 29.♖xa5 ♘c3. **29.♖b6+! ♔f7 30.♗xb7 d3** 30...♘d5! 31.♖b5 ♗xb7 32.♖xb7+ ♔f6 33.♖a7 ♖d6. **31.♗xc8 ♖xc8** 31...d2 32.♗e6+ ♔f8 33.♖f1 d1♕ 34.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 35.♔g2 is also only a draw.



32.♖d6?? A blunder: 32.♖b7+! forces a draw because of 32...♔f6 33.♖b6+ ♔f7 34.♖b7+ ♔f6 35.♖b6+ as Black cannot play 35...♔g5 because of 36.f4+ gxf3 (36...♔h5 37.♘xf5+–) 37.♘xf3+ ♔h5 38.♖e5 ♖cf8 39.h3 and the mating attack will finally net White material after 39...♖hg8 40.g4+. **32...♖hd8** Now the passed pawn decides. **33.♘xf5 d2** White only has a few desperate checks. **34.♖e7+ ♔f8 35.♖f6+ ♔g8 36.♘h6+ ♔h8 37.♘f7+ ♔g7 38.♘xd8+ ♔xf6 39.♖e6+ ♔f5 40.♖d6 d1♕+** White resigned.

□ **Boris Chatalbashev**
■ **Stelios Halkias**
Cutro 2001

1.d4 e6 2.c4 d5 3.♘f3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 f6 7.♗e3

White acknowledges the strength of ...g5 and is happy to defend d4, aiming for a logical set-up (as in the Rubinstein Variation) with a kingside fianchetto. Black has nothing better but to transfer the game into 'Swedish' waters with

7...c4 8.g3

Although it is not illogical to move the bishop once again after Black has released the central tension, 8.♗f4 does lose a lot of time – after 8...♗b4 9.e3 ♘ge7 10.♗e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♗f5 12.h3 a6 13.g4 ♗c6 14.♔h2 a typical position is reached with chances for both sides. The players agreed to an early draw in Melchior-Olsson, Sollentuna 1995.

8...♗b4 9.♗g2 ♘ge7 10.0-0 0-0

Both sides have developed logically. Black has chances on the queenside and on the light squares – a consequence of 7...c4. For the same reason, White is better placed in the centre and he would like to prepare e2-e4. The best way to implement this plan, is, in my opinion, the move that Chatalbashev now plays:

11.♘e1

To get a good feel of the position, here are a few practical examples:

– 11.♗f4 ♗e6 12.♘e1 (going for the same manoeuvre ♘e1-c2 as in the game) 12...♕d7 13.♘c2 ♗xc3!? 14.bxc3 ♖fe8 15.♖b1 b6 16.♖e1 ♘g6 (demonstrating the disadvantage of 11.♗f4) 17.♕d2 ♗f5 18.♘b4 ♗e4 19.♗xe4 ♖xe4 20.f3 ♖e7 21.♘xc6 ♕xc6 22.♗e3 ♖ae8 23.♗f2 f5 and Black is superior, Mastrokoukos-Graf, Hania 1993. A good example of how Black should play these positions.

– 11.a3 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♗f5 13.♗c1 b5 14.♘d2 ♕d7 15.e4 ♗g4! 16.f3 ♗e6 17.f4 f5 18.e5 a5 and with the centre blocked, Black is ready to advance on the queenside, Schebler-M.Haag, Wuppertal 1994.

– 11.♗d2 ♗e6 12.♖e1 (12.e3 ♗xc3!? 13.bxc3 ♕d7 14.♕e2 b5 15.♖fb1 ♖fb8 16.♘e1 ♗f5 17.♖b2 a6 was fine for Black, Hölzl-Sommerbauer, Tweng 2007) 12...♔h8 13.b3!? ♕a5 (13...cxb3) 14.♕c1 ♗a3 15.♕d1 ♕a6? (15...♗b4!) 16.bxc4 ♕xc4? 17.♗f1 ♘xd4? 18.♘xd4 ♕xd4 19.♘b5 was winning for White, although she only drew in Maric-Chelushkina, Becici 1994.

11...♗e6

There is nothing against the slightly more active 11...♗f5. Play more or less resembles our main game after:

– 12.♘c2 ♗a5 13.f3 b5?! (or 13...♕d7 14.♗f2 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 b5) 14.♗f2 b4 15.♘a4 ♗b6. Both sides have their chances, but Lputian managed to outplay his opponent after: 16.e4 ♗e6 17.♖e1 ♖e8 18.♗f1 ♖c8 19.♖c1 ♗f7 20.exd5 ♕xd5? (20...♗xd5) 21.♘xb6 axb6 22.♘e3! ♕xd4 23.♘xc4 with a nearly winning advantage in Lputian-M.S.Tseitlin, Rimavska Sobota 1991.

– 12.f3 ♕d7 13.♗f2 ♖ad8 14.♘c2 ♗a5 (14...♗xc3) 15.e4 ♗xc3 16.bxc3 ♗h3 17.g4 ♗xg2 18.♔xg2 h5!? 19.h3 ♕e6! was also fine in Lucchi-Molina, Cesenatico 2000.

12.♘c2

12...♗a5

Black can also take on c3 to increase his control over the light squares. I actually prefer this to the text. 12...♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♕d7 14.♖c1 b5 Black is already advancing on the queenside. White needs a couple of preparatory moves before he can play e4. 15.♗d2 ♖fb8!? 16.♖b1 ♗f5 17.♖b2 a5 18.a3 b4 19.e4?! according to play, but it doesn't quite work here. 19...♗xe4 20.♗xe4 dxe4 21.♖xe4 ♘d5 with a clear edge for Black in Diotallevi-M.Haag, Arco 1999.

13.♗d2 ♕d7 14.♘a4!? b6!? 15.b4! cxb3 16.axb3 ♗xd2 17.♕xd2

This type of position is always a bit better for White. If you like you can apply Euwe's ancient rule of the number of pawn groups here – the few the better. **17...♖fc8 18.b4 ♘f5 19.♖fc1 ♘ce7 20.♘c3 ♖c4 21.e3 ♖ac8 22.♘e1 ♘d6** 22...♖xb4 23.♘xd5 ♖xc1 24.♘xe7+ ♘xe7 25.♖xc1±. **23.♘d3 ♕c7 24.♘f4 ♗f7 25.♘fe2**

And after a long manoeuvring game, in which White always had a slight edge, Black managed to hold a draw.

□ **Sergio Lopez**
■ **Enrique Arguinariz**
Buenos Aires 2002

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 f6 7.♗c1 ♗g4!

As pointed out above, Black is playing a

Panov Attack with reversed colours and the additional ugly f7-f6. However, usually such an approach promises little for the first player in the way of an opening advantage. The present line is a case in point.

Black can also still play in 'Swedish' style, although in that case the bishop is perhaps better placed on c1 than on e3, where it was blocking the e-pawn:

– 7...c4 8.g3 ♗b4 9.♗g2 ♘ge7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♘e1 ♗e6 12.♘c2 ♗a5 13.f3 ♖b8?! (13...♕d7) 14.♗f4 ♗c7 15.♗xc7 ♕xc7 16.e3 b5 17.♘e2 b4 18.b3 ♖fd8 19.♖f2 a5 20.♗f1 a4 and the queenside pawns carried the day in Blagidze-Mikenas, Palanga 1961.

– 7...♗f5 8.e3 c4 9.♘h4!? ♗e6 10.♗e2 ♗b4 11.0-0 ♘ge7 12.♗g4!? f5 13.♗c2 ♘c8 14.g3 0-0 was OK for Black in Oney-Sulypa, Istanbul 2003.

8.dxc5

White is trying to create something and sharpens the game. If Black now reacts to passively he will remain with nothing but static weaknesses in his position. Not surprisingly, given the focus on square d4 in the whole Tarrasch he has 8...d4! available.

The solid 8.e3 promises little after 8...cxd4 9.exd4 ♗b4! 10.♗e2 ♘ge7 11.0-0 0-0

– 12.h3 ♗h5 13.♕b3 ♔h8 14.♗e3 ♗a5 15.♖fd1 (15.♕xb7 ♖b8 16.♕a6 ♖xb2) 15...♗b6 16.♘h4?! (16.♘a4) 16...♗xe2 17.♘xe2 ♘a5 18.♕d3 ♘c4 and Black slowly outplayed his opponent in Nemet-Bluvshtein, Balatonlelle 2003.

– 12.♕b3 ♔h8 13.a3 ♗d6 (13...♗a5 14.♕xb7?! – 14.♗e3 – 14...♖b8 15.♕a6 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♘xd4) 14.♖d1 ♘a5 15.♕a2 ♖c8 16.♗d2 ♘c4 17.♗e1 ♖e8 18.h3 ♗e6 and Black was slightly better in Mascarinas-Cooper, Manila Olympiad 1992.

8...d4

This looks strong. However, Alexander Graf has played 8...♗xc5 which is also interesting. After 9.♘xd5 (9.♕xd5!? and now Black has certain compensation after 9...♘b4 10.♕b3 ♕d7) 9...♘ge7 10.e4 ♘xd5 11.exd5 (11.♕xd5 ♕b6 or 11...♕xd5 12.exd5 ♘b4) 11...♗xf3 (11...♗b4+!? 12.♗d2 ♕e7+) 12.gxf3 ♘d4 13.♗c4 b5 14.♗b3 0-0 15.♗e3 ♕b6 the players agreed a draw in Cherniak-Graf, Odessa 1991.

9.♘e4

After 9.♘a4 Black has the characteristic 9...b5! to obtain sufficient counterplay after 10.cxb6 axb6 11.b3 ♗b4+ 12.♗d2 ♘ge7 13.♗xb4 ♘xb4 14.♕d2 ♕d6 15.a3 ♘bc6 16.e3 ♗xf3 17.gxf3 0-0 18.f4 ½-½, Curtis-Halpin, Sydney 1990.

9...♕d5!

Already indicated by Keilhack in 1993 as the best move for Black. Still, Black was not exactly worse either after 9...♗xc5 10.♘xc5

♕a5+ 11.♗d2 ♕xc5 12.♕b3 ♘ge7 13.e3 dxe3 14.fxe3 (14.♗xe3 ♕a5+) but now he should avoid 14...♕b6?! 15.♕xb6 axb6± Eisele-Beyer, Württemberg 1991/92.

10.♘d6+ ♗xd6 11.cxd6 ♕xd6

Black has an edge in development and his d4-pawn is restraining White's play. Yet, there is no need to lose as quickly as he does in the game.

12.e3

Perhaps 12.g3!?.

12...♖d8

Here 12...0-0-0 also makes sense.

13.exd4 ♕e7+! 14.♗e2?!

Best was probably 14.♗e3 and now 14...f5!?. If 14.♕e2? then 14...♗xf3! 15.♕xe7+ ♘gxe7 16.gxf3 ♘xd4 17.♗d3 ♘xf3+ 18.♔e2 ♘d4+ 19.♔f1 ♘ec6 and White is suffering despite his pair of bishops.

14...♗xf3! 15.gxf3 ♘xd4

This has no further theoretical significance of course, because Black has emerged from the opening with the better chances.

16.♕a4+??

A blunder to finish the game. White had to try 16.♔f1 ♕e6∓ or 16.♕d3 ♕f7.

16...b5

And White resigned as he is losing his queen.

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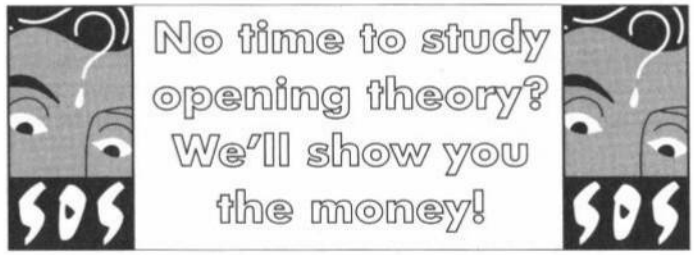

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